

# BÒRD NA GÀIDHLIG



The benefits & opportunities in establishing a  
National Partnership for Gaelic Medium  
Initial Teacher Education &  
Continuing Professional Development

**REPORT**

**prepared for Bòrd na Gàidhlig**

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## Foreword

Since the establishment of Gaelic Medium Education (GME) in 1985, there has been a relatively steady increase in the number of students accessing this form of education.

In the most recent census of Gaelic pupils, from 2011-12,<sup>6</sup> there were reported to be 2,418 GME primary pupils in 61 schools across 14 local authority areas in Scotland, and there were 1104 GME secondary pupils in 35 schools across 9 local authority areas. The range of courses taken through the medium of Gaelic by these pupils may vary significantly according to the school in which GME is undertaken. Some schools only offer Gaelic Fluent Speakers' classes at the secondary level. These figures reflect the important role of Gaelic in contemporary Scottish education.

Despite many advances and successes over the years, one of the chief problems facing GME throughout Scotland is in no way original: there remains, as there has been previously, a shortage of teachers who are qualified and/or being educated to provide instruction in GME provision.

Small numbers of qualified GME teachers and smaller numbers of initial-stage GME teachers creates a range of associated challenges: from problems filling teaching vacancies and a shortage of supply teachers, to difficulties in providing a range of subjects in Gaelic, and releasing educators for CPD.

In order to make the best use of those teacher educators with Gaelic abilities or specialist knowledge of the Gaelic education sector, and in an effort to improve the efficiency of teacher education for GME, it has been suggested that there should be national partnership for Gaelic Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and/or Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

Bòrd na Gàidhlig is committed to helping to underpin future developments for the education of teachers to work in Gaelic Medium through the commissioning of research in this area. This report discusses the opportunities and benefits of establishing a National Partnership for Gaelic Medium ITE and CPD.

## Glossary of Terms

BA	Bachelor of Arts
BEd	Bachelor of Education
CnES	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
Gabh an Cothrom	Literally means “take the opportunity” and is a initiative to raise awareness of the benefits of a Gaelic teaching career.
Gàidhlig le Foghlam	Literally means “Gaelic with Education” and refers to a joint-honours initial teacher education degree.
GLOW	Teacher’s Intranet for Scotland
GLPS	Gaelic Learners in the Primary School
GME	Gaelic Medium Education
GTCS	General Teaching Council for Scotland
HMIE	Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education (now subsumed by Education Scotland)
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
LTS	Learning and Teaching Scotland (now subsumed by Education Scotland)
MA	Master of Arts
PGDE(P)	Postgraduate Diploma in Primary Education
PGDE(S)	Postgraduate Diploma in Secondary Education
SCILT	Scottish Centre for Information on Language Teaching
SFC	Scottish Funding Council
STEC	Scottish Teacher Education Committee
Streap	Literally means “climb” and is a CPD programme that helps teachers improve their Gaelic for GME and/or reflect on Gaelic teaching practice.

## Why has this research been conducted?

Whether the provision is catering to students who use Gaelic as a home language, or who only begin to learn the language through their schooling, there is ample evidence to suggest that GME is beneficial to pupils' cognitive development and success in a wide variety of curriculum areas.<sup>19</sup> Pan-linguistic evidence tells us that approach to education encapsulated in GME is a powerful tool in developing language users who are bilingual and biliterate in both target languages: Gaelic and English.<sup>1</sup> GME can also be important for supporting youngsters' emotional and psychological wellbeing. With the evidence in support of GME being so persuasive, there is a growing desire to widen accessibility to this form of education. This would bring the benefits of bilingualism to larger numbers of youngsters in Scotland, whilst simultaneously supporting the Language Planning goals articulated by Bòrd na Gàidhlig in their first *National Plan for Gaelic 2007-2012*,<sup>3</sup> *Ginealach Ùr na Gàidhlig*<sup>5</sup>, and which we expect to appear in the second *National Plan for Gaelic 2012-17*.

The University of Aberdeen and the University of Strathclyde, both in partnership with UHI, have traditionally been the key players in Gaelic ITE and CPD. Acknowledging the growth in GME, these universities have previously discussed the possibility of establishing a dedicated national centre for Gaelic teacher education, which would provide both ITE and CPD opportunities to those who would have interest in becoming qualified to teach in a GME setting. However, as awareness of Gaelic and Gaelic education grows, it seems appropriate to extend the discussion to encompass a national partnership, into which a wide variety of stakeholder groups could seek to contribute.

This report seeks to discuss the benefits and opportunities that could be created through a national partnership for the provision of Gaelic Medium ITE and CPD. Key stakeholders have been contacted to help investigate the ways in which a National Partnership could help address some of the needs and goals for Gaelic education and, indeed, for the quality of ITE and CPD for teachers in Scotland more generally.

In order to discuss the feasibility of this proposal and to begin to advise on the most efficient ways to support and develop Gaelic through the future education of GME teachers, this report has involved a wide variety of stakeholders and research methods in developing its recommendations.

“The Bòrd will work in partnership with local authorities and the Scottish Government to increase the supply of Gaelic teachers, at both primary and secondary school level.”

Bòrd na Gàidhlig  
*Ginealach Ùr na Gàidhlig*







## How was the research conducted?

The research reported in this document was conducted in three stages. The data collected in these three stages has been used collectively to inform recommendations for the future development of GME ITE and CPD in Scotland and for the proposed National Partnership.

### STAGE 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

In the first stage of research, a literature and policy review was undertaken to identify the key issues that seem to affect ITE and CPD for the contemporary education of Gaelic Medium teachers. In addition to qualitative data published in a variety of sources (e.g. book chapters, journal articles and reports), quantitative data was collected for pupil enrolment in GME and ITE courses, as well as with regard to teachers censuses.

The results of this policy and literature review are presented wherever relevant, and are the foundation for the information presented in the section “Background Information.”

### STAGE 2: SURVEY OF STAKEHOLDERS

The second stage of research involved conducting an online survey to draw together information about contemporary provision for Gaelic Medium ITE and CPD opportunities and to begin to explore opportunities for the future development of this area. A variety of means were used to advertise the survey (e.g. GLOW, word-of-mouth and contacts within stakeholder groups, & mailing lists).

All responses that are reported in this document were from the period of February to the beginning of April 2012. The data collected was descriptively analysed, with attention paid to any trends that could be identified using the grouping categories of occupation, and educational profile. We received responses from individuals throughout Scotland, with the following local authorities being given as place-of-work: Aberdeen City (3 respondents), Angus (1 respondent), Argyll and Bute (18 respondents), East Ayrshire (2 respondents), North Ayrshire (1 respondent), South Ayrshire (2 respondents), East Dunbartonshire (3 respondents), Edinburgh City (5 respondents), na h-Eileanan Siar (25 respondents), Fife (1 respondent), Glasgow City (20 respondents), Highland (40 respondents), Inverclyde (1 respondent), North Lanarkshire (6 respondents), South Lanarkshire (2 respondents), Perth and Kinross (5 respondents), Stirling (2 respondents), Lothian (1 respondent), Renfrewshire (1 respondent). Three individuals worked in two local authorities, one reported to work nationally, eleven people declined to answer, and three were not in work.

The final sample of respondents to this online survey included: 157 individuals, although not all respondents answered all questions. Nineteen percent of respondents who reported their gender were male, and 81% female. The age of our respondents was fairly evenly distributed across age categories, with 28% aged 21-29, 23% aged 30-39, 21% aged 40-49, and 27% aged 50-59.

A large majority of respondents self-assessed their Gaelic language proficiency as being advanced in all four skills areas (81% in listening, 78% in speaking, 77% in reading, and 76% in writing). Only eight of our respondents reported to have no Gaelic language skills. The high level of Gaelic language skills for a majority of respondents is not surprising, considering that most of those who completed the survey were actively working in Gaelic education as teachers. The sample included 111 individuals who reported that they were currently working as teachers in Scotland.

We asked these 111 primary and secondary teachers to clarify in what provision of Gaelic education (if any) they contributed. Many educators worked in more than one form of Gaelic education, some within either primary or secondary, and others contributing to both areas (as illustrated in the table below).

	<i>Number</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
<b>GLPS</b>	7	7%
<b>GME Primary</b>	67	63%
<b>Gaelic (Learners) Education (in Secondary)</b>	20	19%
<b>GME Secondary</b>	19	18%
<b>Gaelic Fluent Speakers (in Secondary)</b>	25	23%

Nine of the 111 active QTs who responded to the survey answered that they did not work in Gaelic education, four of whom knew no Gaelic. Four additional respondents skipped the question. In summary, we received responses from 90 current Gaelic teachers, approximately 36% of all Gaelic teachers in Scotland (according to 2011/12 statistics).<sup>27</sup> In addition to these Gaelic teachers, we received responses from 8 students in a Gaelic ITE programme, three retired teachers, and 8 individuals who have formerly worked as Gaelic teachers, but who now work in other capacities (e.g. as a head teacher). We consider all these 108 individuals to be “Gaelic educators” in this report.

Findings of this survey are presented in the sections “What do Gaelic educators think about their ITE experience?” “What do Gaelic educators think about CPD for GME?” and “Opportunities and Issues for Gaelic ITE and CPD” alongside interview data.

### **STAGE 3: INTERVIEWS WITH STAKEHOLDERS**

The third stage of research involved conducting semi-structured interviews with members and representatives of a variety of stakeholder groups, as well as initial-stage teachers, newly qualified teachers (NQTs), and qualified teachers.

These interviews were conducted in-person and by phone, with individuals throughout Scotland. The individuals who were interviewed were chosen through a non-random purposeful method, which means that they were carefully selected to represent a particular group or for their personal experience.

With regard to purposeful sampling, efforts were made to ensure representatives from all HEIs participating in ITE could give input into the research and report. However, not all providers consented to an interview and only 6/7 ITE providers are represented within the data.

We also sought to represent the experiences and opinions of Gaelic educators, and interviewed Gaelic teachers at various stages in their career (this includes the initial education process and retirement).

Finally, we spoke to a small number of individuals who worked in other stakeholder groups, including local authorities, Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and Bòrd na Gàidhlig. This was the smallest group in which we conducted interviews.

The final interview sample consisted of: 31 people. All interviews and surveys were conducted in February to May 2012. Findings of the interviews are presented in the sections “What do Gaelic educators think about their ITE experience?” “What do Gaelic educators think about CPD for GME?” and “Opportunities and Issues for Gaelic ITE and CPD alongside interview data.



## Background Information

In contemporary Scottish education, Gaelic plays an important role in a variety of ways. From GME and Gàidhlig Fluent Speakers classes, to Gaelic learners' provision and the up-and-coming Studying Scotland strand, Gaelic is being made available to more and more youngsters in our schools.

There seems to be growing acknowledgement and awareness that the benefits of knowing an additional language, in this case the Gaelic language, is hugely beneficial to children's cognitive and social development. As interest in Gaelic education grows, however, so too does our need for highly qualified Gaelic teachers. In this section, some of the background information, statistical data and previous research relating to the training of Gaelic teachers will be presented.

The demand for Gaelic teachers, specifically teachers whose linguistic capacity is sufficient to teach through the medium of Gaelic, has been documented in previous research. It has been estimated that, in order to maintain current levels of provision, approximately 80 new GME primary and secondary teachers will need to qualify in the next ten years (as will be discussed in this section).

It has long been understood that there is a genuine need to provide high quality ITE or CPD for interested and qualified individuals to help them prepare to enter into a Gaelic classroom. To date, this training has been provided to a very high standard by ITE providers at the University of Aberdeen, Strathclyde University, often in partnership with UHI partner Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and Lews Castle College.

However, a diversifying job market for Gaelic speakers and the expansion of Gaelic education in its various forms means that it is an opportune moment to investigate the feasibility and potential benefits of establishing a national partnership for Gaelic Medium teacher education through ITE and CPD. This development may be able to address the current "shortage" of qualified Gaelic teachers, which has been recently discussed by HMIE:

*Many parents and educational authority providers feel discouraged as a result of difficulties with recruiting teachers for Gaelic Medium posts. Over the years, a shortage of Gaelic **staffing** has caused concerns and hampered the growth of GME.<sup>16</sup>*

In order to maintain current levels of provision, approximately 75 new GME primary and secondary teachers will need to qualify in the next ten years...



Vacancies for GME teachers can stay open for long periods of time, causing major logistical problems for head teachers.

### **CALLS FOR MORE GME TEACHERS**

The need for more individuals to access ITE in preparation for GME, or to help those teachers who report the ability to teach Gaelic to transition to forms of Gaelic education through CPD opportunities has been well described in the 2005 report by the Gaelic Medium Teachers' Action Group.<sup>11</sup> More recently, HMIE (now Education Scotland) reiterated this request, in their 2011 report on Gaelic Education.<sup>16</sup> The following sections will help to explain why so many individuals and stakeholder groups are unreserved in their calls for more Gaelic medium teachers.

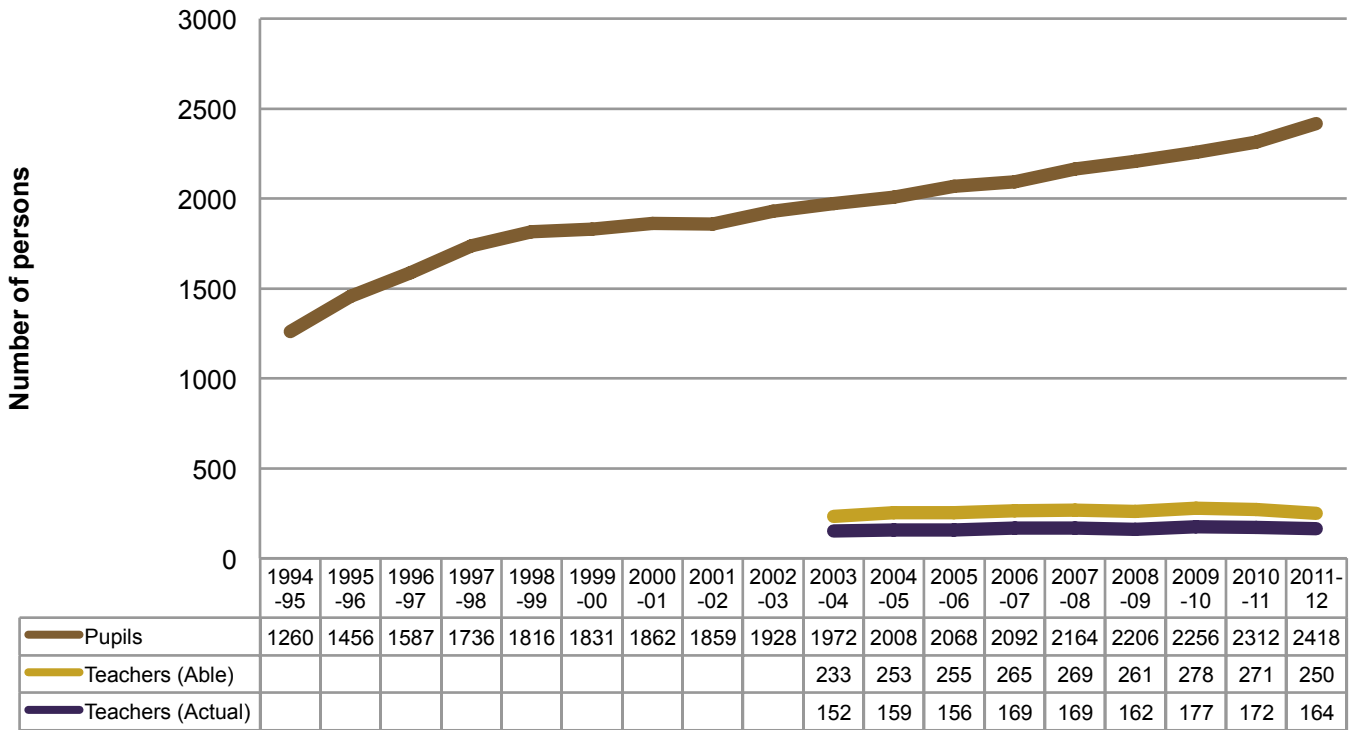
### **STATISTICS**

The imperative need to increase the number of qualified Gaelic teachers in Scotland is reflected in the statistics collected by the Scottish Government's Statistical Bulletin Education Series, where the data record a very slow and modest increase of qualified Gaelic teachers over time – a growth that has been far more tempered than the growth seen in enrolment of students in GME itself. Perhaps on account of this disproportionate growth between student numbers and teacher availability, there was a 1.6% vacancy rate among GME secondary teachers in 2010.<sup>28</sup>

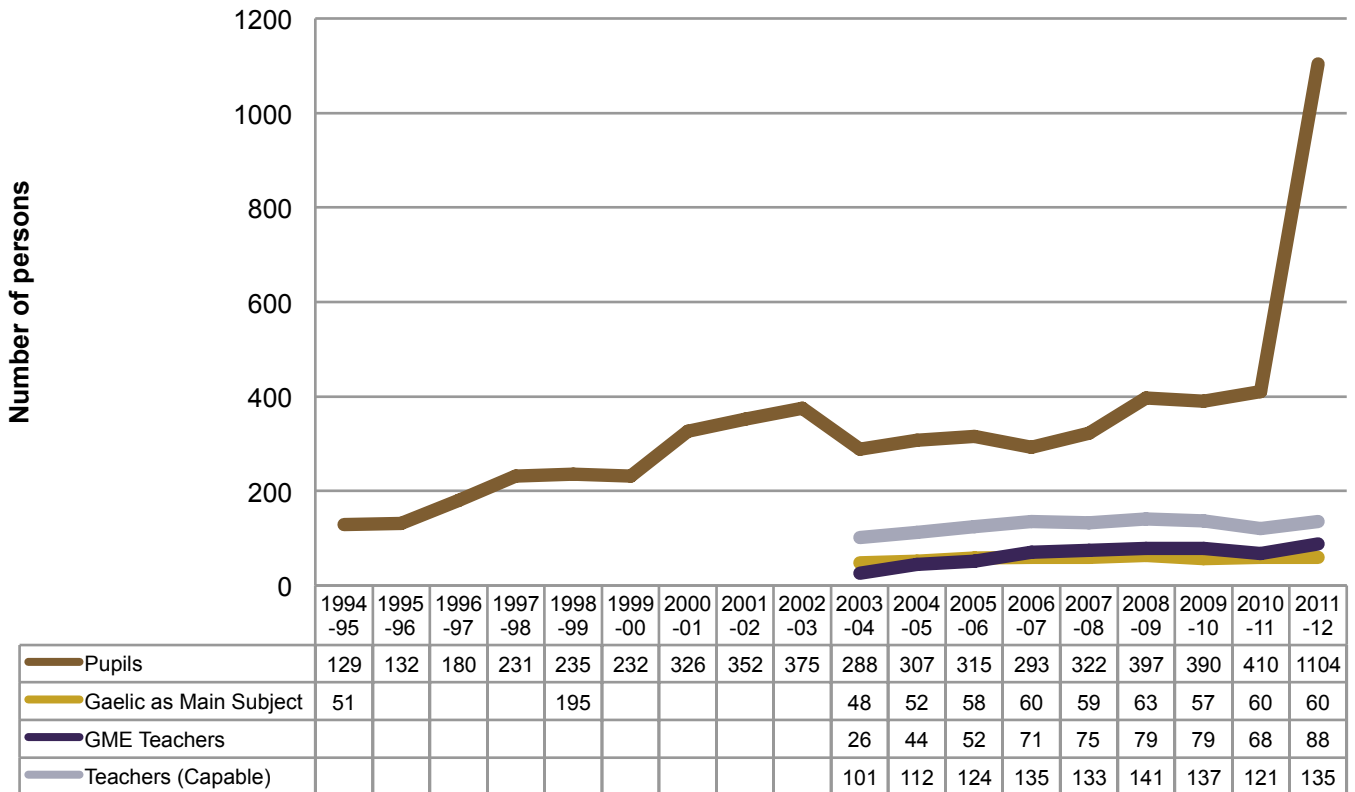
On account of there being a relatively small pool of qualified GME teachers (and Gaelic teachers more generally), when there are vacancies for GME teachers, these positions can stay open for long periods of time. For example, in 2004, there were 7 GME Primary posts that remained vacant for more than 3 months, and 4 positions in the same sector were vacant for more than 3 months in the following academic year.<sup>28</sup> In the same two years, long-term vacancies for GME also appeared in the secondary sector, with 4 and 2 positions remaining vacant for more than three months, respectively.<sup>28</sup> These vacancies can be damaging to children's education pathway and create major logistical problems for head teachers who struggle to sustain GME provision without Gaelic teachers.

As illustrated in the figures on the following pages, and using the examples of GME Primary and Secondary as well as Gàidhlig Fluent Speakers' courses, the growth in Gaelic provision in Scotland has been very rapid in terms of student enrolment numbers since its inception in 1985<sup>8</sup>. The growth in the number teachers working in GME Primary, GME Secondary and Gaelic as a subject, on the other hand, has been far more gradual.<sup>6, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27</sup>

**Growth of GME Primary  
1985/86 - 2011/12**



**Growth of GME Secondary  
1994/95- 2010/11**



\*It should be noted that the way in which "GME secondary" is defined by those tabulating enrolment in provision changed for the 2011-12 year, and thus the figures show an artificially large increase. These figures now include students whose only Gaelic input is Gàidhlig Fluent Speakers' classes.

While the growth of GME and Gaelic education in general is desirable for educational and Language Planning reasons, there needs to be acknowledgement that this kind of expansion cannot occur without attention being paid to ITE and CPD for Gaelic teachers, or else there will be a resurgence in teacher shortages. This is particularly important to consider, as plans for a new Gaelic school in Edinburgh are taken forward,<sup>2</sup> and HMIE reports that “a further 6 Gaelic schools” are under consideration nationwide.<sup>16</sup> If we continue to encourage the expansion of GME provision in Scotland, there is an obvious need for growth in the training of teachers to provide Gaelic education in all forms.

### RETIREMENT PROJECTIONS

An additional reason why it is concerning that we have so few GME teachers relates to the ages of Gaelic teachers working at the primary and secondary level. Whilst the average age of Gaelic teachers in 2011/12<sup>27</sup> was low (see tables below), there are still large proportions of our existing body of qualified teachers for Gaelic who are nearing retirement: 19% of GME primary teachers, 20% of GME secondary teachers, and 20% of Gaelic subject secondary teachers in 2011/12 were above the age of 55. A further 10% of GME primary teachers, 14% of GME secondary teachers, and 14% of Gaelic subject teachers at secondary were above the age of 50.

Age of Primary GME teachers	Able to teach GME	Are teaching GME
>25	8	6
25-29	36	28
30-34	40	29
35-39	25	19
40-44	36	19
45-49	26	14
50-54	33	17
55+	46	31
<b>Totals</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>164</b>

Age of Secondary GME teachers	Able to teach GME	Are teaching GME
>30	27	20
30-34	18	13
35-39	8	7
40-44	14	9
45-49	24	12
50-54	32	13
55+	28	19
<b>Totals</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>93</b>

What this means in practical terms is that in the next ten years or so an additional 48 GME primary teachers and an additional 32 GME secondary teachers will need to be created or shifted from English to Gaelic medium to sustain current levels provision, if present patterns of retirement are maintained. Since GME provision is actually growing throughout Scotland, even if these figures can be met, there would remain a shortage of qualified Gaelic teachers in Scotland.

### DUAL QUALIFICATION

As can be seen in the data presented on the previous pages, there are qualified teachers with the ability and capacity to teach in Gaelic who are not currently working in GME (56 below the age of 50 in GME primary, and 30 in GME secondary), but we need to remain cognisant that not all qualified GME teachers will opt to work in this sector of education.

GME teachers are, in fact, dually qualified, and may opt to teach in English medium contexts if they find these positions more desirable. Some Gaelic educators may also prefer to teach Gaelic as a subject, rather than to enter into a Gaelic medium unit or school. This is an additional and an important factor that needs to be considered when considering the number of teachers that might be required for GME in the future.

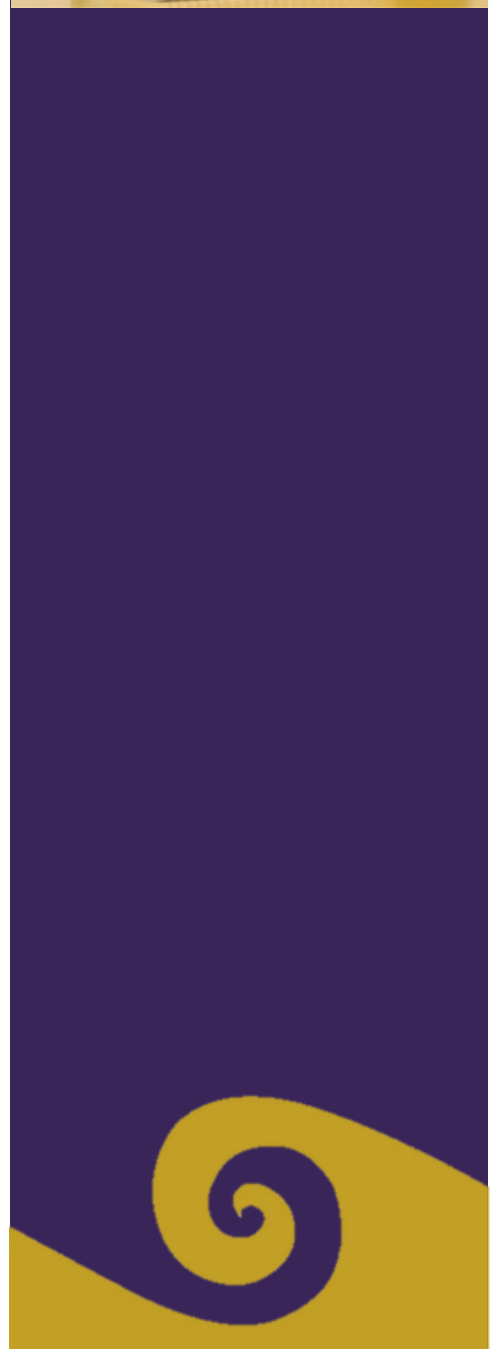
### LOCATION OF GME UNITS AND SCHOOLS

Although the availability of qualified GME teachers who are not working through the medium of Gaelic may suggest that there is not a demand for more students to be trained to teach in the area, there are mitigating factors that need to be taken into consideration. One of these factors is the location of GME units and schools.

GME provision is found in a diversity of areas. A majority of GME units are based in remote rural areas (particularly in Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and Highland Council areas), but GME is also found in major urban areas (including Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Inverness). The growth of GME in urban areas can, to a certain extent, create a human resources issue for remote rural areas, as Rosemary Ward has previously explained:

*The growing interest in Gaelic education in central Scotland and the greater variety of Gaelic teaching posts in these areas have resulted in rural and island vacancies being difficult to fill...<sup>30</sup>*

More recently, this same phenomenon has been observed of the





“...as far as I’m aware there are very few Gaelic trained and qualified teachers in the supply list.”

Head teacher

wider Gaelic economy, wherein jobs in more urban areas seem to be more desirable than those in rural areas.<sup>16</sup> Effectively, there seems to be a very predictable shift of highly qualified Gaelic users away from urban areas, which has negative implications for the future provision and expansion of GME in more rural areas.

### **SUPPLY LIST GAELIC TEACHERS**

There is an additional concern that, when there is a vacancy or absence for a GME teacher in a rural area, this can have a negative impact on the future learning and use of Gaelic that is disproportionately large in comparison to the effect of teacher shortages in more urban areas. This is because substitute teachers can be more difficult to source for Gaelic education, as are replacements for QTs taking secondment, positions elsewhere, or retirement. In previous research, one head teacher described this issue:

*...normally in that situation, where you can’t appoint somebody, you look to what’s called the supply list to find a qualified teacher who can come in and do the job for a while, but as far as I’m aware there are very few Gaelic trained and qualified teachers in the supply list.<sup>17</sup>*

Severely limited numbers of qualified Gaelic medium teachers in supply registers nationally and locally means that sickness, secondments, and other breaks from the teaching profession can cause major logistic problems for head teachers and threaten students’ learning progression. It can also make it difficult for head teachers to allow Gaelic teachers out of the classroom to access CPD.

### **COMPETING JOB MARKET**

As provision for Gaelic education expands throughout Scotland, so too is people’s awareness of the Gaelic job market. There is increasing knowledge about the variety of employment opportunities that are available through the medium of Gaelic (particularly in the public and creative sectors). Thus, when we consider the pool of proficient Gaelic users who may have the linguistic skills necessary to enter into GME, we also need to factor in the likelihood that many of these individuals may prefer not to teach.

Even for those who do opt for a career in teaching, recent research in Glasgow<sup>7</sup> has shown that there is growing demand for tutors in the adult and continuing education sector and this too may draw proficient Gaelic users away from careers in GME primary or secondary.

## What are the current provisions for Gaelic initial teacher education?

In Scotland, there are presently 7 ITE providers. These providers are:

- University of Aberdeen
- University of Dundee
- University of Edinburgh
- University of Glasgow
- University of Stirling
- University of Strathclyde
- University of the West of Scotland

These seven universities have ITE programmes that are certified by the GTCS to train individuals to become primary or secondary teachers in Scottish schools. All graduates from these programmes will still need to pass a probationary year before achieving full qualification to teach.

ITE programmes presently take two broad forms: undergraduate and postgraduate. The undergraduate degree is a BEd, BA or BSc, or MA in Education (usually 4 years full time), and the postgraduate route leads to a diploma in Education, known as a PGDE (usually 1 year full time). Following a review of ITE published in early 2011,<sup>10</sup> widely known as the Donaldson Report, most ITE programmes are undergoing reorganisation and it is expected that all BEd programmes will be replaced with BA or MA programmes in Education, depending on the hosting university (the Universities of Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen provide an MA for undergraduate degrees). In keeping with the Donaldson Report's recommendations, undergraduate ITE programmes are now encouraged to provide opportunities for concurrent study, to broaden teachers' knowledge base and employability. This kind of concurrent study may allow greater numbers of initial-stage teachers to gain the Gaelic proficiency required of GME.

The only ITE providers that currently train for Gaelic Medium are The University of Aberdeen and the University of Strathclyde. University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) also contributes to ITE and CPD for Gaelic Medium through collaborations with Aberdeen and Strathclyde.

In this section, these existing ITE and CPD provisions will be reviewed. Attention will also be given to the capacity of other ITE providers to contribute to Gaelic Medium teacher training, as this information may be crucial to future developments in the area.



## HOW ARE GME TEACHERS INITIALLY EDUCATED?

The various ITE providers in Scotland and those CPD opportunities that already exist for individuals who are interested to teach Gaelic, or to teach through the medium of Gaelic, will be reviewed in the following section. However, it is worthwhile dedicating some attention to the way in which teachers are trained in Scotland and to note how it is that GME ITE and CPD varies from that provided to teachers working in the English language sector of Scottish education.

In Scotland, students who are interested in becoming teachers have two access points into teaching. The first, is to enter into an undergraduate Education programme, which are offered at seven universities: Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Stirling, Strathclyde, and West of Scotland. These degrees normally span four years, if studied full time, but part time study options are available. Undergraduate programmes allow students to train to become primary teachers in most cases and, at the University of Stirling, can also prepare students to work at the secondary level. It is less common to enter directly into secondary training through an undergraduate programme because students who wish to work in secondary schools are required to have more elaborate subject knowledge.

An additional route into Gaelic Medium teaching that begins at the undergraduate level is the MA Gaelic with Education offered jointly by UHI and the University of Aberdeen, with the latter issuing the ITE component of the programme.

A second point of entry into teaching is through the Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) programmes offered at the same aforementioned HE providers of ITE. These courses last for the duration of one year if studied full time, and students can opt to prepare to become either primary or secondary teachers. Individuals who study to become secondary teachers will need to be accepted for a particular area of specialism, for example: Literature, Maths, General Science, Physical Education, Drama, Music, Visual Arts, Geography, or a Modern Language. In order to train to specialise in a Modern Language, the applicant must demonstrate very high levels of proficiency in the target language, as well as at least three months residency in a country in which the language is spoken. These requirements of residency are not applicable to Gaelic.

The number of students who can be admitted into an undergraduate Education or PGDE programme is limited by the SFC, based on a variety of statistics collected by the Scottish Government Learning Directorate (including current employment rates for qualified teachers as well as projected statistics for primary and secondary schools). Each HE provider of ITE is informed as to how many students it may accept into its degree programmes for a particular year, and this makes the process of being accepted into an undergraduate Education or PGDE programme reasonably competitive.

Students who are accepted into these programmes share their time between classroom-based (or distance) learning and placements in Scottish schools. It is on these placements that the initial-stage teachers begin to hone their own teaching practices.

Following the successful completion of an undergraduate Education or PGDE programme, graduates become newly-qualified teachers (NQTs) can opt to participate in a probationary year, wherein they are given paid work teaching at a Scottish school, before they can be said to have achieved full qualified teacher (QT) status. Very few NQTs follow the “traditional” route and opt out of the probationary scheme, finding their own employment and being considered to be under probation for two years. It should be noted, however, that overseas students must follow the traditional route as they do not qualify for the probationer induction scheme.

## PRIMARY VERSUS SECONDARY ITE

Individuals who are interested in becoming secondary school teachers in Scotland need to have the same core skills required of a primary teacher, as well as in depth knowledge of a subject area. Secondary teachers need to have specialist knowledge of their area (e.g. Maths, Science: Biology, History, etc.), but GME secondary teachers do not require a Gaelic qualification to teach in the medium of Gaelic.

What this means, in practice, is that any Gaelic speaker can apply to become a primary teacher through either the undergraduate or PGDE routes. However, only those who are able to demonstrate specialist knowledge can apply to become secondary teachers. This means that the pool of potential GME secondary teachers is necessarily smaller than that for primary.

At the secondary level, the two ITE providers catering for GME (i.e. Aberdeen and Strathclyde) must be able to offer a potential student's specialism in order for this student to be accepted into the PGDE programme. For example, because Visual Art is not otherwise offered as a PGDE secondary specialism at the University of Aberdeen, a GME secondary applicant to this university could not receive the relevant specialised instruction that would allow them to teach in this area. This can cause frustration for all parties involved, but also has negative implications for the diversity of subjects that can be taught in Gaelic medium at secondary.

There has previously been a scheme which allowed teachers to train for GME primary, as well as S1 and S2, but this is no longer active.



## THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

The University of Aberdeen is one of the two ITE providers in Scotland with the most involvement and influence within GME. Aberdeen helps prepare teachers to teach through the medium of Gaelic at both primary and secondary levels and offers a variety of entry points into ITE. Additionally, Aberdeen is a key player in national CPD provision to help improve the language skills and comfort of Gaelic Medium NQTs, QTs and to help those working in mainstream English medium education convert to Gaelic Medium.

### Human Resources

The University of Aberdeen, School of Education, employs Gaelic specialists who help to provide ITE and CPD in the area. In addition to these individuals within the School of Education, the university also offers Gaelic language teaching and has members of faculty specialising in this area within its School of Language and Literature, Department of Celtic/Gaelic. Traditionally, there has also been a strong relationship between the School of Education and the Celtic/Gaelic department at the university, with active job shares.

### ITE Pathways: Undergraduate

BEd Honours Primary.

In this four-year course of study, students are able to gain qualification to teach in GME primary. In order to be accepted on a GME place, applicants must meet all generic criteria demanded for the BEd, as well as demonstrate literacy and oral fluency in Gaelic. Students study Gaelic with the university's Celtic/Gaelic department as an elective in years 1 and 2 of their study. As a part of this ITE programme of study, students gain specialised knowledge in immersion, bilingualism, and delivery of culture through Gaelic. They will also have school experience in Gaelic, with at least one placement in English medium to ensure they are dually qualified to work in Gaelic or English medium contexts.

MA Joint Honours Gàidhlig le Foghlam (Gaelic with Education) Primary or Secondary.

In this four-year course of study, students are able to gain qualification to teach in GME primary or secondary. Students will study for two years at UHI partners Sabhal Mòr Ostaig or Lews Castle College, in the medium of Gaelic, and then take two additional years of tuition from the University of Aberdeen via distance learning. Admission requirements are local to Sabhal Mòr Ostaig or Lews Castle College, respectively, but to transition to year 3 of the programme students must complete an interview in Gaelic. They will also have school experience in Gaelic, with at least one placement in English medium to ensure they are dually qualified to work in Gaelic or English medium contexts.



### ITE Pathways: Postgraduate

#### PGDE Primary.

In this one-year course of study, students are able to gain qualification to teach in GME primary. Students must already have an undergraduate degree and demonstrate high proficiency in Gaelic oral and literacy skills to be admitted into the programme, following an interview. They will also have school experience in Gaelic, with at least one placement in English medium to ensure they are dually qualified to work in Gaelic or English medium contexts.

#### PGDE Secondary.

In this one-year course of study, students are able to gain qualification to teach GME secondary in a specialist area. Students must already have an undergraduate degree and specialist knowledge, as well as high proficiency in Gaelic oral and literacy skills to be admitted into the programme, following an interview. They must have a degree worth 80 credit points in Gaelic if their subject specialism will be Gaelic, at least 40 at SCQF level 8 and higher English. If their subject specialism will not be Gaelic, then they only require to demonstrate fluency in the language, with 80 credit points in their subject specialism. They will also have school experience in Gaelic.

#### PGDE Primary or Secondary by distance.

In this two-year course of study, students are able to gain qualification to teach in GME primary or secondary by studying at a distance. They must have high proficiency in Gaelic oral and literacy skills to be admitted into the programme, following an interview. They will also have school experience in Gaelic, with at least one placement in English medium to ensure they are dually qualified to work in Gaelic or English medium contexts.

### Existing Partnerships

The University of Aberdeen is an important contributor to Strep, which is discussed in the CPD section of this report, with management of the CPD provision being based with a member of faculty of the School of Education. This is one of many partnerships that see the joint-working of the University of Aberdeen and UHI partners, in this case Sabhal Mòr Ostaig. Lews Castle College is another UHI partner of the School of Education at the University of Aberdeen. As previously discussed, partnership with UHI allows for Aberdeen to offer an MA Joint Honours Gàidhlig le Foghlam, which is currently the pathway into GME ITE that provides the greatest numbers of students.

## THE UNIVERSITY OF DUNDEE

The University of Dundee currently has no provision for language education, including GME.

### Human Resources

At present, there are no members of faculty at Dundee with specialisms in Gaelic education.

### ITE Pathways

The university offers the following degree programmes:

- BEd (Honours) Primary
- PGDE Primary
- PGDE Secondary (Chemistry with Science)
- PGDE Secondary (Mathematics)
- PGDE Secondary (Physics with Science)

None of these programmes currently allows students to prepare to enter a Gaelic medium learning environment. However, it is important to note that those who train as primary teachers could feasibly go on to teach GME if they are fluent in the language. Similarly, a secondary teacher whose specialism is not Gaelic, but who is fluent in the language, could feasibly teach in GME secondary.

### CPD Pathways

While the University of Dundee does participate in CPD provision for NQTs and QTs, it does not currently offer any provision aimed specifically toward GME.

### Existing Partnerships

The University of Dundee currently has no partnerships that particularly concern GME.





## THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

The University of Edinburgh currently does not educate teachers to enter into Gaelic Medium, however, it has a strong history of Educational research in the area.

### Human Resources

There are researchers based at the University of Edinburgh's School of Education who either specialise in Gaelic education, or who or could provide insight into the form of bilingual education constituted in GME units and schools.

In addition to these Gaelic education specialists, the University of Edinburgh's Celtic Department also employs a number of highly proficient Gaelic speakers who would be able to contribute to teacher education in the medium of Gaelic. Several of whom have also been prolific and influential in Gaelic Education research.

### ITE Pathways

The university offers the following degree programmes:

- BEd (Honours) Primary
- BEd Secondary (Physical Education)
- PGDE (Primary)
- PGDE (Secondary)

None of these programmes currently allows students to prepare to enter a Gaelic medium learning environment. However, it is important to note that those who train as primary teachers could feasibly go on to teach GME if they are fluent in the language. Similarly, a secondary teacher whose specialism is not Gaelic, but who is fluent in the language, could feasibly teach in GME secondary.

### CPD Pathways

While the University of Edinburgh does participate in CPD provision for NQTs and QTs, it does not currently offer any provision aimed specifically toward GME.

### Existing Partnerships

The University of Edinburgh currently has no partnerships that are of particularly concern to GME.

## THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

The University of Glasgow currently does not educate teachers to enter into Gaelic Medium, although it has done so previously.

### Human Resources

There are no known members of faculty at the University of Glasgow's School of Education with the ability to teach through the medium of Gaelic or with specialisms in Gaelic education, but the School is highly supportive of Scottish Studies. The University's Celtic Department employs a number of highly proficient Gaelic speakers with diverse research specialisms. The University of Glasgow also has a highly active Gaelic Development Officer and hires on Gaelic tutors for its Adult and Continuing Education provisions.

### ITE Pathways

The university offers the following degree programmes:

- BEd Primary / Music Primary and Secondary / Religious and Philosophical Studies Secondary / Technological Education Secondary
- PGDE Primary
- PGDE Secondary

None of these programmes currently allows students to prepare to enter a Gaelic medium learning environment. However, it is important to note that those who train as primary teachers could feasibly go on to teach GME if they are fluent in the language. Similarly, a secondary teacher whose specialism is not Gaelic, but who is fluent in the language, could feasibly teach in GME secondary.

### CPD Pathways

While the University of Glasgow does participate in CPD provision for NQTs and QTs, it does not currently offer any provision aimed specifically toward GME. It does, however, offer a PG Certificate in Learning and Teaching of Modern Languages in the Primary School. Previously, the university has been active in helping 9 QTs from all parts of Scotland begin to build confidence to convert to GME, by hosting a four day Gaelic language skills course in partnership with Bòrd na Gàidhlig, although this was not facilitated through Education.

### Existing Partnerships

The University of Glasgow currently has no partnerships concerned with GME, but has previously worked with Bòrd na Gàidhlig in the provision of CPD for potential Gaelic educators, although this was not through the School of Education. It also partners with the University of Strathclyde for the provision of Secondary specialisms at the PGDE level.







## **THE UNIVERSITY OF STIRLING**

The University of Stirling currently does not educate teachers to enter into Gaelic Medium.

### **Human Resources**

Research on early years education in Gaelic Medium has previously been contributed to by individuals based with the University of Stirling.

### **ITE Pathways**

The university offers the following degree programmes:

- BA Professional Education (Primary) with two specialisms
- BA/BSc Honours with teaching subject and Professional Education (Secondary)
- BA/BSc & General degree of BA/BSc with teaching subject[s] and Professional Education (Secondary)

None of these programmes currently allows students to prepare to enter a Gaelic medium learning environment. However, it is important to note that those who train as primary teachers could feasibly go on to teach GME if they are fluent in the language. Similarly, a secondary teacher whose specialism is not Gaelic, but who is fluent in the language, could feasibly teach in GME secondary.

### **CPD Pathways**

While the University of Stirling does participate in CPD provision for NQTs and QTs, it does not currently offer any provision aimed specifically toward GME.

### **Existing Partnerships**

The University of Stirling currently has no partnerships that particularly concern GME.

## THE UNIVERSITY OF STRATHCLYDE

The University of Strathclyde is one of the two ITE providers in Scotland with the most involvement and influence for GME. Strathclyde helps prepare teachers to teach through the medium of Gaelic at both primary and secondary levels and offers a variety of entry points into ITE.

### Human Resources

The University of Strathclyde employs members of faculty in the School of Education who are specialists in the delivery of ITE for GME.

### ITE Pathways: Undergraduate

BEd honours primary.

In this four-year course of study, students are able to gain qualification to teach in GME primary. In order to be accepted on a GME place, applicants must meet all generic criteria demanded for the BEd, as well as demonstrate literacy and oral fluency in Gaelic. Students study alongside other BEd pupils throughout the four years, and take an elective in years 3 and 4 to grant the Gaelic medium specialism. They will also have school experience in Gaelic, with at least one placement in English medium to ensure they are dually qualified to work in Gaelic or English medium contexts..

### ITE Pathways: Postgraduate

PGDE Primary.

In this one-year full-time (or two-year part time, subject to demand) course of study, students are able to gain qualification to teach in GME primary. Students must already have an undergraduate degree and demonstrate high proficiency in Gaelic oral and literacy skills to be admitted into the programme, following an interview. The programme can be taken from Strathclyde campus.

Previously, a PGDE primary programme for GME has also been offered through a partnership with UHI's Lews Castle College and Inverness College, with blended delivery on-campus and virtually.

GME students have a personal tutor with specialism in Gaelic and some modules are provided in Gaelic. Students will also have school experience in Gaelic for P1-3, with a P4-7 placement in English medium to ensure they are dually qualified to work in Gaelic or English medium contexts.



### PGDE Secondary.

In this one-year course of study, students are able to gain qualification to teach GME secondary in a specialist area. Students must already have an undergraduate degree and specialist knowledge, as well as high proficiency in Gaelic oral and literacy skills to be admitted into the programme, following an interview. They must have a degree worth 80 credit points in Gaelic if they intend to specialise in Gaelic, or 80 credits in their specialism and fluency in the language if it is not their subject. Students of this programme will have school experiences in Gaelic, if this is their chosen subject specialism, and may have placements in both English and Gaelic if they choose a different subject specialism.

### CPD Pathways

While the University of Strathclyde participates in CPD for NQTs and QTs, it does not currently have any CPD courses on offer that directly relate to Gaelic Medium.

### Existing Partnerships

The University of Strathclyde currently has a partnership with Inverness College and Lews Castle College, partners of UHI, for the provision of Gaelic medium ITE.

## THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST OF SCOTLAND

The University of the West of Scotland does not currently participate in ITE or CPD for GME or Gaelic more generally. It has negotiated a partnership with Sabhal Mòr Ostaig's short courses branch to offer final year ITs who have chosen to specialise in Modern Languages, as well as those who have successfully completed PGDE Primary, the opportunity to train for GLPS through an intensive summer session.

### Human Resources

At present, there are some members of staff within the School of Education at the University of the West of Scotland with research specialism in Gaelic Education, but no capacity for ITE delivery through the medium of Gaelic.

### ITE Pathways

The university offers the following degree and diploma programmes:

- BEd (Honours) Primary
- PGDE Primary
- PGDE Secondary

None of these programmes currently allows students to prepare to enter a Gaelic medium learning environment. However, it is important to note that those who train as primary teachers could feasibly go on to teach GME if they are fluent in the language. Similarly, a secondary teacher whose specialism is not Gaelic, but who is fluent in the language, could feasibly teach in GME secondary.

### CPD Pathways

While the University of the West of Scotland does participate in CPD provision for NQTs and QTs, it does not currently offer any provision aimed specifically toward GME.

### Existing Partnerships

The University of the West of Scotland currently has no partnerships that particularly concern GME.





University of the  
Highlands and Islands  
Oilthigh na Gàidhealtachd  
agus nan Eilean

## UNIVERSITY OF THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS (UHI)

Although UHI is not an ITE provider, its importance to ITE and CPD for Gaelic medium cannot be overestimated.

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Lews Castle College and Inverness College campuses are particularly important to provision in the area, with fruitful partnerships existing between UHI and the universities of Aberdeen and Strathclyde, specifically with their respective Schools of Education.

### Human Resources

There are important contributors to ITE and CPD for Gaelic medium based with UHI, and additionally also influential researchers in the area.

### ITE Pathways

The university collaborates with the University of Aberdeen in the provision of a MA Joint Honours Gàidhlig le Foghlam, which can lead to a GTC registration for GME primary or secondary. It also collaborates with the University of Strathclyde in the provision of PGDE distance learning, with preparation for GME being available. These pathways into Gaelic teaching are widely regarded as being crucial to the sustainability of GME, as they allow individuals to receive ITE who may, for a variety of reasons, require to remain close to their local communities. Sabhal Mòr Ostaig have also been involved in delivering a week-long course for Strathclyde's PGDE students as a part of their existing ITE programme.

### CPD Pathways

UHI is highly active in the provision of CPD for GME teachers, with Streap constituting the most well established provision.

### Existing Partnerships

The UHI is one of the most active and influential partners in GME ITE and CPD, working alongside the Universities of Aberdeen and Strathclyde to ensure flexible ITE and CPD pathways are available to learners. The members of relevance to these partnerships are: Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and Lews Castle College, working jointly with the University of Aberdeen, and Lews Castle College and Inverness College, working jointly with the University of Strathclyde. Strathclyde has also had more limited partnership with Sabhal Mòr Ostaig in the provision of a weeklong course.



## What do Gaelic educators think about their ITE experience?

In order to gain some insight into the way that existing ITE programmes for Gaelic educators function, we surveyed and interviewed both faculty members at the relevant HEIs, and teachers themselves. We spoke to and/or surveyed initial-teachers, NQTs and QTs, as well as a depute and head teachers.

### HOW ADEQUATELY PREPARED ARE TEACHERS FOR GAELIC EDUCATION?

One of the first questions we asked teachers, was how adequately they felt their ITE had prepared them to teach in a range of situations. This question was only asked of teachers who specifically indicated that they had been trained to deliver Gaelic education. Some teachers working in Gaelic education, often those had undertaken ITE further in the past, would not have had the opportunity to be educated specifically for Gaelic education.

It was felt that it would be unreasonable to make judgements about how well ITE prepares teachers for Gaelic education based on the opinions of those who had not participated in the relevant programmes. Thus, after sorting out individuals who had not been specifically trained to teach in Gaelic education, we had 74 respondents who told us how adequately they felt their ITE programme had prepared them for a range of teaching contexts. The responses to this question, are illustrated below.

The training adequately prepared me to...	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
Teach in Scottish schools	6%	7%	26%	<b>45%</b>	16%
Teach Gaelic as an additional language	12%	24%	<b>31%</b>	24%	8%
Teach through the medium of Gaelic	14%	<b>30%</b>	27%	22%	8%

What these figures demonstrate is that, while a majority of the teachers we surveyed felt they had been adequately prepared to enter into a Scottish classroom, their belief that they had been prepared to teach Gaelic or, more specifically, to teach through the medium of Gaelic was less strong.



The feeling of having been inadequately prepared to enter the teaching profession is not unique to the Gaelic education sector; it can feel intimidating to transition from a role of student to teacher. However, while acknowledging that fear and doubt is a normal part of the transition from initial-teacher to NQT, it is still noteworthy that a majority of our respondents agreed that ITE could prepare teachers for a classroom (58% agreed, and 16% strongly agreed). Nevertheless, our respondents seemed to feel that their education to teach was weaker in relation to Gaelic medium.

For a myriad of reasons, many of our respondents recollected that they had not felt comfortable when initially entering into Gaelic education as an NQT. Teachers told us about the experience of entering a Gaelic medium context as having been “daunting,” and that they would have wanted more opportunity within their ITE programme “to build confidence” for Gaelic medium teaching.

The perception of not having been prepared to enter into Gaelic education was, as would be expected, much stronger among respondents who had gone through ITE before Gaelic-specific training was offered. However, even for more recently qualified teachers, it was noted that ITE needed to account for the great differences between Gaelic education in which Gaelic is a subject and in which it is a medium of instruction:

*My ITE consisted of classes with modern language teachers, which was useful in terms of teaching techniques for learners. However, I received very little input in terms of Gaelic fluent teaching and felt ill-equipped while on placement and at the start of my probation year.*

Even for those who were educated to deliver Gaelic as a subject during ITE, it was not always felt that this education was relevant to classroom practice after the development of Gaelic medium: “[I was] trained to teach Gaelic, not G[aelic ]M[edium].”

This sense of being unprepared or underprepared for GME has strong implications for future CPD development, but also is a reflection of past and present ITE provision. It should, however, be acknowledged that the fact that teachers told us they had felt unprepared to enter into GME does not, necessarily, mean that they were displeased with their ITE experience.

## WHAT ARE THE GOOD PARTS OF ITE FOR GAELIC EDUCATORS?

When we asked teachers what they had liked most about their ITE experience, praise was plentiful and forthcoming.

Teachers talked about the quality of instruction they received from their tutors, and many named the tutor who would have provided input for Gaelic education as having been particularly helpful. Tutors were described variously as being “great,” “invaluable,” “encouraging, helpful and supportive.” One current student of a PGDE Primary programme enthusiastically explained that her tutor was “a great source of information, advice, and tips!” The feeling that individual tutors working in ITE programmes for Gaelic were highly capable and helped to support teachers in their initial education was widespread, both in survey and interview responses.

Teachers also noted that small class sizes had fostered a sense of community and peer support. In the following quotation, the aforementioned PGDE Primary student helps to describe why it is that the small class sizes that are typical of Gaelic ITE can be beneficial to learning: “We had a small group in our tutorial group so I got to know them [the other initial-teachers] well and I feel I now have a good support network of peers.” Respondents often talked about the closeness of students working toward teacher qualification for Gaelic education, and the benefits of “working together.”

Among many positive attributes of existing programmes, the most frequently mentioned by the 74 teachers who had been specifically educated for GME were school placements, which were cited by 28 respondents as having been the most enjoyable part of the ITE experience. As one respondent explained, “although they were challenging at times, they were essential for real-life experience ‘on the job.’” It is clear that working alongside Gaelic educators and “seeing experienced teachers in action” was of great benefit to teachers during their initial education. These placements were regarded as being both informative and enjoyable.

“My tutor was... a great source of advice, information and tips!”

PGDE Primary Student



## DOES ITE FOR GAELIC EDUCATION NEED TO BE DIFFERENT TO ITE FOR ENGLISH?

Respondents were generally of the opinion that working in Gaelic education required Gaelic-specific preparation. Some of the reasons they provided to explain why Gaelic-specific preparation was required included: the special demands of an immersion learning environment, the unique approaches to Gaelic early literacy development, the demands of subject-specific terminology (particularly at secondary), the need to be familiar with Gaelic teaching resources, and the need to further develop and reinforce Gaelic grammatical knowledge. A selection of quotations on these issues are provided below.

Of the 74 teachers who had been specially trained for Gaelic education, only two felt that Gaelic education did not require specific training. Fifty-five of these teachers left comments to explain how Gaelic educators could be supported in ITE. The themes of these comments are described below.

### Immersion Education

On the topic of immersion education, teachers were not just explaining why they believed that Gaelic ITE had to be different to that provided to English-medium teachers, but they were also expressing a desire to see more attention being paid to this topic. Teachers explained that “[w]e would have benefited more from an insight into the full immersion process involved within Gaelic Medium Education and [from being given] ideas on how to implement this.”

The need to be aware of the extra demands of an immersion form of education was mentioned by several other respondents as being one of the key reasons why Gaelic initial teacher education had to be different to that provided to English medium contemporaries. Many teachers felt that ITE should help prepare teachers to enter into teaching environments in which not all students would be using Gaelic as their first language; for example:

*More advice on how to turn children into Gaelic speakers, how to liaise with non[-]Gaelic speaking parents, how to deal with the grammar aspects of Gaelic, how to enthuse children for Gaelic outwith primary school.*

### Subject-Specific Terminology

Several secondary teachers noted that subject specific terminology was a particular concern for Gaelic Medium teachers. They explained that “[s]ome kind of subject specific support [is required] even just to deal with the terminology which sometimes requires a lot of thought before lessons.”

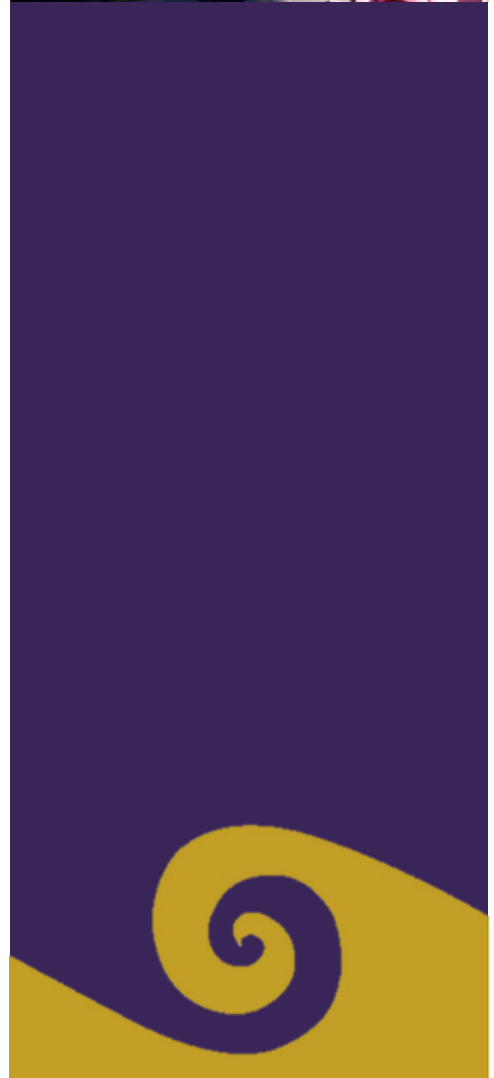
One teacher, noted that her subject-specific vocabulary for areas like maths and science was particularly poor, because she had been educated in these areas exclusively through the medium of English. The need to equip teachers with subject-specific vocabulary was a frequent argument in support of specifically Gaelic Medium ITE provision.

### Early Literacy Development

Early literacy development tends to involve phonics, whether the language being fostered is Gaelic or English. Of course, the phonics system being used by teachers for English medium will have limited applicability to Gaelic contexts, but those participating in ITE for Gaelic will be introduced to a Gaelic phonics system: *Facail agus Fuaim*.

The need for phonics and early literacy development to be supported through ITE that is specifically designed for Gaelic Medium teachers was mentioned by several teachers as a reason why the education for Gaelic educators had to be different to that provided to others. Teachers requested that Gaelic ITE give more “training in phonics at the immersion stage and the best way to teach this,” as well as first-hand “[p]ractice using phonics.”

Several teachers noted the P3 year as being of particular importance to early literacy development, and noted that ITE for Gaelic educators had to teach them “[w]hen and how to introduce Gaelic reading” and how to introduce “English at the P3 stage.” These are all unique concerns for Gaelic primary, and are strong arguments in support of the need for an ITE programme designed specifically for Gaelic educators.



### Resources for Gaelic Education

The teachers who were surveyed and interviewed noted that ITE for Gaelic education needed to help put teachers in contact with Gaelic teaching resources. Again, this was one of the reasons provided to explain why ITE for Gaelic teachers needed to be different to that provided to English medium teachers. Our teachers suggested that Gaelic ITE should provide: "...guidance on resources, both finding ones already out there and guidance in creating new resources."

### Grammar

As one teacher explained, many Gaelic medium "teachers are not as confident as they would like to be" in the area of Gaelic grammar. When asked to explain why they felt working in Gaelic required specific training, many teachers discussed the need to have more input into grammar during ITE. These teachers were not suggesting that they had poor Gaelic language skills, but they did confess that they appreciated (or would have appreciated) the opportunity to "'brush up' on Gaelic grammar" and, specifically, "advanced grammar."



## WHAT COULD MAKE ITE MORE RELEVANT FOR GAELIC EDUCATORS?

We asked teachers what would have made their ITE experience more relevant for working in Gaelic education, and were provided with a number of insightful suggestions. In many cases, these recommendations dovetail with the justifications that teachers provided for needing distinct ITE provision for Gaelic educators.

Examples of recommendations included: an increased number of Gaelic inputs throughout the ITE process, increased input on how to address some of the unique demands associated with GME, a larger amount of teaching focussed on building subject-specific vocabulary, more training in grammar, more time dedicated to Gaelic resources, preparation for SQA assessment, and more contact with GME classrooms. A selection of quotations on these issues are provided below.

### Increasing the Amount of Gaelic Input

Many of the teachers who responded to our survey or participated in interview told us about their ITE experience having involved very little Gaelic input, in comparison to English. At present, GTCS recommends ITE provision for Gaelic to aim towards a minimum of 50% Gaelic delivery but, in some cases, this means that Gaelic initial teachers receive Gaelic input over and above the regular English medium ITE programme, or they have pull-out sessions over the course of an otherwise English medium module.

We wanted to know how much Gaelic input more recently qualified teachers perceived there to be within their ITE programmes. In our survey, we asked all educators who reported to have been specifically trained for Gaelic education to indicate how much or how little Gaelic input had been given in their ITE programme. Teachers were asked to indicate their agreement to the following statements: “Most of my training was taught through the medium of Gaelic,” and “Most of my training was taught through the medium of English.” When the responses of the relevant 74 Gaelic educators were tallied, we found that 65% either strongly disagreed or disagreed that the majority of teaching had been through Gaelic, and 72% agreed or strongly agreed that the majority had been through English.

When we looked only at teachers who have been educated within the past 5 years (32 individuals), answers indicated the same trend. These teachers still felt the majority of their teaching had been in English (81%). Interestingly, four individuals (13%) felt the majority had been through Gaelic, [REDACTED]



"I can't say enough how desperately ITE and CPD need to train teachers on how to immerse children."

Primary GME teacher

Some individuals commented that limited amounts of Gaelic input could be a particular problem for those whose Gaelic language skills would benefit from further development through use, including more recent learners, and most suggested that the predominance of English in ITE delivery was indicative of ITE programmes that were, fundamentally, designed for the English medium education.

As one teacher explained: "Most of it [ITE] is in English and has nothing to do with Gaelic Medium Education. I don't understand why they're doing it for us when it's not specifically about Gaelic Medium Education." Another teacher explained, "We hardly had any Gaelic specific lectures or tutorials, they were mainly geared towards teaching English." Teachers told us that they wanted "more Gaelic lecturers" during ITE, and that "the vast majority of workshops, lectures etc." in their ITE "were in English"

Teachers were expressing preference for an ITE specifically for GME that both focussed on the practicalities of working in GME, and in which Gaelic would be a more prominent and functional language of instruction.

Interestingly, this was the one topic upon which stakeholders at in all areas were most vocal because it has implications for educators' own ability to teach through the medium of Gaelic. As one respondent explained,

*There should definitely be more emphasis on Gaelic modules/lectures [in ITE]. There also needs to be a more rigorous selection process looking at an applicant's language ability; too many people are accepted with sub-standard Gaelic, which can only lead to children being taught sub-standard Gaelic, and a general weakening of the language and culture.*

For this individual, increasing the level of Gaelic input in ITE could function as a mechanism to weed-out those initial teachers whose language skills would be insufficient for GME, or could help to improve these skills. The suggestion that some GME teachers enter into classrooms as NQTs with substandard Gaelic skills is, of course, a very controversial issue, but it needs to be acknowledged as it was mentioned by individuals in all variety of stakeholder groups, including confessions from two Gaelic teachers who had expected more opportunity to further develop their language skills in ITE.

### Ensuring the Proficiency of Gaelic Teachers

In survey and interview, stakeholders and participants in GME frequently mentioned their concern about the linguistic proficiency of graduates from Gaelic ITE programmes. Many individuals expressed a strong desire for ITE providers to be more stringent in their vetting of initial-stage Gaelic teachers.

A selection of comments on this issue are reproduced below:

*Colleges need to make sure that the language skills of people wishing to teach Gaelic are of a high enough standard. After all, one would not be accepted on to a training course to teach physics or maths having only a basic knowledge of the subject.*

*I feel that the standard of teacher training for Gaelic is entirely unacceptable.*

*There should be steps taken to ensure that teachers who are currently teaching in GME have the level of ability, with regards to the Gaelic language, to do so effectively.*

Comments like these were made by people in all areas related to Gaelic education, including by several teachers who confessed they did not feel capable and/or confident to teach through the medium of Gaelic despite having graduated from a Gaelic ITE programme.

Although Strep can go a long way to addressing these kinds of issues, any national partnership for the provision of Gaelic ITE would have to address the issue of fluency to teach in GME, and one way to do so would be to increase the amount of Gaelic medium tuition within the programmes themselves.



### Supporting the Unique Demands of Gaelic

Whether in interview or through our survey, one of the most common things Gaelic educators wanted to share was how unique are the demands of GME. One teacher suggested that, in ITE, all Gaelic educators should be “[g]etting an insight into the challenges teachers within Gaelic Medium face and ways of overcoming those” and this sentiment was highly indicative of many others’.

Teachers strongly recommended that ITE programmes give increased acknowledgement to the special concerns of Gaelic medium educators, particularly as they prepare to work in immersion contexts (i.e. contexts in which a majority of students are learning Gaelic through education rather than at home). Even teachers who had completed ITE more recently, and whose programmes had made some acknowledgement of the challenges associated with an immersion context, suggested that there was still scope to increase initial teachers’ awareness and preparedness for GME.

One Gaelic educator explained to us that “[t]eaching a GME P1-P7 class is far more challenging than anybody in most forms of education can imagine. 90% of the children come in with very little Gaelic and from families with no Gaelic at home.” This quote actually addresses two key issues raised by many of our respondents: first, that many Gaelic educators work in composite classes and, second, that many students enrolled in GME do not use Gaelic as their first language.

Primary teachers, in particular, seemed keen to gain more practical skills for responding to first language English speakers learning through Gaelic medium:

*I can't say enough how desperately ITE and CPD need to train teachers on how to immerse children ...the opportunity is so great and almost universally lost to create an actual immersion environment where children learn Gaelic... Teachers need to practise figuring out how to make a class run in Gaelic when the pupils don't speak Gaelic yet...*

Another teacher pointed out that GME teachers in primary “need to actually teach Gaelic language structures, rather than assume” that children “learn through hearing the language.” In whatever words they chose to expressed the sentiment, a large majority of teachers who participated in our survey or interviews suggested that ITE programmes to make better acknowledgement of the diverse language needs of learners within GME.

### Increasing Contact with GME Settings

All teachers in an ITE programme for Gaelic educators at present will have contact with Gaelic education settings through their placements. However, even for teachers who had multiple opportunities to work in a GME setting during placements, it was felt that more visits to GME classrooms and, where possible, schools would be beneficial to initial-stage teachers.

A few teachers suggested that “all placements [should be] in Gaelic,” but others were weary that this might limit their future career options, as it could mean they were not dually qualified for English and Gaelic medium. Although teachers did not seem to think their English medium placements had been without value, some did suggest that “[m]ore, perhaps 3, of the placements [should be] in GME.”

Teachers valued the lessons learned on GME placements very highly, and felt that more contact time with other GME teachers would only be beneficial for their readiness to enter a Gaelic classroom. As one teacher explained, “The best training is gained from being in the classroom...we didn’t do enough in schools, in my opinion. However, since I’ve gained experience in the class, it has [been] fantastic! I continue learning and gaining experience on a weekly basis!”

The importance of putting initial-stage Gaelic teachers in more contact with QTs working in GME was reiterated by some stakeholders, one of whom emphasised that efforts to increase learning outside the HEI classroom would meet the recommendations of the Donaldson Report.<sup>9</sup>

“As a native speaker not educated through Gaelic Medium myself, I had to use a Gaelic dictionary a lot to check up the Gaelic for the most basic mathematical things.”

Primary GME teacher

### Building Subject-Specific Vocabulary

A concern for several secondary teachers who participated in our research, either in survey or interview, was their own limitations with regard to subject-specific vocabulary. For teachers, this often seemed to mean: the language that would be required to teach subjects other than language and literature (often including Maths and Sciences). This desire to have ITE provide increased input to build knowledge of and confidence in using subject-specific language extended to primary teachers, although it was less frequently mentioned by individuals in this population. As one teacher explained,

*[m]ore input regarding specialist Gàidhlig language used in the classroom would have been good. We did get some (limited) input, but could have done with more... As a native speaker not educated through Gaelic Medium myself, I had to use a Gaelic dictionary a lot to check up the Gaelic for the most basic mathematical things.*

### Training in Grammar

Many teachers, regardless of how they had acquired Gaelic, noted that there would be benefit in ITE devoting more attention to grammar. They felt there would be two potential benefits to this; the first being that for some teachers “further training in developing” their “own languages skills would have been very useful.” The second function was learner-focussed, and meant that better knowledge of grammar would improve their own ability “to introduce children to the aspects of grammar not apparent to English speakers.”

### Familiarising with Gaelic Resources

Teachers tended to desire more awareness of Gaelic education resources. As one teacher explained, “[i]t would have been more relevant if we [were] able to look at Gaelic education across the curriculum, and look at resources other than during placements.”

### Preparing for Assessment

Although it was only mentioned by a small number of teachers, it was noted by some that ITE would benefit by giving initial-stage teachers more guidance on how best to prepare GME students for assessment at the senior secondary level, and on how to assess GME students in Gaelic at the primary level (especially for second language Gaelic learners).



## What kinds of CPD opportunities are available to GME educators?

NQTs and QTs working in GME have, at their disposal, the same range of CPD provision as are offered to mainstream English teachers. In addition to these opportunities, there is some CPD provision that is specifically targeted at Gaelic educators, including head teachers, and these are regularly offered through a range of providers, including: Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Education Scotland (previously Learning and Teaching Scotland, LTS) in partnership with Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Education Scotland through GLOW, Stòrlann, and Strep. The Donaldson Report has also recommended Gaelic as an area for which it may be beneficial to create a national CPD strategy.<sup>10</sup>

A great deal of CPD directed at QTs will, inevitably, be directed by individual authorities on a needs basis, with Quality Improvement Officers (QIOs) helping to decide the who, what, where, when and why and facilitating access to funding. By all accounts, access to CPD has decreased dramatically in the current economic climate, and this extends to CPD for Gaelic educators.

Not all CPD for Gaelic education allows participants to receive credit for learning. In other words, not all CPD courses for Gaelic educators will allow participants receive a certificate or diploma to recognise achievement and learning. However, all CPD provision will allow educators to address professional practice and skills development.

English medium teachers who wish to become Gaelic Medium teachers can access Strep for a conversion pathway. Strep also allows Gaelic teachers to improve their language skills. Teachers accessing this CPD provision must already have good language skills in Gaelic, as the course is inappropriate for language novices.

*Gabh an Cothrom's* website [teagasg.com](http://teagasg.com) and GLOW provide a directory for CPD provisions, but in order to access CPD educators will have to pass through the relevant QIO, or be willing to arrange or pay for additional training themselves. Often, teachers will also have to be released from teaching by their school management in order to attend courses.



**Gabh  
an  
Cothrom**

'S thig a theagasg!

### **BÒRD NA GÀIDHLIG**

The Bòrd is highly active and participative in all areas of Gaelic education, including CPD. While the Bòrd partners with a range of other providers, they independently offer support to teachers entering their probationary year in GME, through an annual conference. Another provision made by Bòrd na Gàidhlig is a week-long Gaelic language immersion week for teachers.

### **EDUCATION SCOTLAND AND BÒRD NA GÀIDHLIG**

The Gaelic Head Teacher's Conference, which has held in two locations in the 2011-12 school year, is organised by Bòrd na Gàidhlig and received support from Education Scotland (then LTS). The conference brings together head teachers and allows them to discuss practical ways to support Gaelic within their school environment. The conference is supported by a virtual network, hosted by GLOW. The conference has previously featured keynote addresses by influential bilingualism researchers, Prof. Colin Baker and Prof. Antonella Sorace, but also gives head teachers a chance to share their experiences of working in a context in which GME has been gradually developing. In previous years, delegates have also been able to participate in workshops on: supporting Gaelic probationers, building capacity for Gaelic, developing a Gaelic community around the school, staffing the curriculum, and examination provision for Gàidhlig and Gaelic (Learners).



**glow**

### **EDUCATION SCOTLAND AND GLOW**

Education Scotland is extremely proactive with regard to offering engaging CPD opportunities to those working in GME and in Gaelic more generally, through the virtual community of GLOW. Through the *dachaidh* (literally: home) portal within GLOW, visitors can access a range of recorded CPD sessions hosted both in Gaelic and English medium, according to topic and the presenters involved. Visitors can also participate virtually in these sessions in real-time, provided they schedule the event into their calendars. In the first quarter of the 2012 calendar, there have been seven CPD events hosted through GLOW for GME educators, and these have included: Moderation in practice, engaging with parents to support children's learning, Gaelic learner education, health and wellbeing, enterprise education, building strategy and moving forward with GME, and building effective partnerships.

### STÒRLANN NÀISEANTA NA GÀIDHLIG

*An t-alltan: co-labhairt do thidsearan Gàidhlig*, is an annual conference hosted by Stòrlann. The conference provides an opportunity for Gaelic teachers at nursery, primary, and secondary levels, as well as QIOs, to join together and explore opportunities to diversify classroom practices. The conference features keynote addresses, but also allows delegates an opportunity to become more familiar with Stòrlann resources and to explore the way in which these resources can be integrated into classroom practice. Topics included in the 2011 conference included: music, maths and numeracy, interdisciplinary learning, drama, poetry, IT, active learning, traditional tales, assessment of speaking, grammar, literacy, and learning support. There is a strong emphasis on sharing best practice, and speakers are brought together from GME schools and units, as well as from specialist groups like SQA and Education Scotland.

### STREAP

The University of Aberdeen leads a CPD initiative, called Streap, which is aimed at teachers who may opt to convert into GME teaching or existing GME teachers who may desire to improve their Gaelic language skills.

Streap is funded by Scottish Government and sees the University of Aberdeen working jointly with UHI partner, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig. Streap offers two courses, the first in language development to support Gaelic medium teaching. The second course is in critical reflection and portfolio building. The courses are offered online with three face-to-face sessions being offered as well. The courses can either provide a Postgraduate Certificate issued by the University of Aberdeen, or be counted toward the Chartered Teacher programme.



...the key message teachers expressed in relation to CPD was not one of praise, but one of frustration at the accessibility of provision.

## What do Gaelic educators think about CPD for GME?

In order to gain some insight into the way that existing CPD for Gaelic educators functions, we surveyed and interviewed a range of teachers and CPD providers.

### EVALUATIONS OF CURRENT PROVISION

Teachers who had participated in CPD for Gaelic were generally complimentary in their evaluations of the provisions. Stèrlann and the annual conference hosted by Stèrlann were particularly noted as being wonderful opportunities to strengthen skills for teaching, and to build awareness of resources and peer support networks. Stakeholders suggested that Stèrlann should invest more work in CPD provision, on account of the quality and usefulness of its annual conference. However, the key message teachers expressed in relation to CPD was not one of praise, but one of frustration at the accessibility of provision.

For some Gaelic educators, there seemed to be a fundamental communication breakdown between CPD providers and those working in schools. These individuals told us about how difficult they found it to be to identify CPD opportunities. This was well-expressed by this GME primary teacher, who had converted from English to Gaelic medium: “The route for mainstream teachers into GME is very vague. It took me months to get even the most basic information.”

While GLOW and the work of Bòrd na Gàidhlig may help an increasing number of Gaelic educators to be aware of Gaelic education CPD opportunities, knowledge of provision is not the only barrier to accessibility. For example, several individuals noted, in survey and interview, that conferences for Gaelic education could often only be attended by one or two teachers per school per year. This meant that some teachers had to go several years before accessing valuable CPD opportunities:

*...the Gaelic Teacher conference held by Stèrlann only allows one teacher from our school to attend each year. Therefore, each of us only get the opportunity to attend every three years, which is inadequate due to the lack of CPD courses available for GM teachers within our local authority.*

Similar issues were mentioned for Stèrlann.

In several interviews, it was explained to that teachers found themselves in a Catch-22 situation in relation to Gaelic CPD. Although teachers, head-teachers, and QIOs were all aware that CPD would help increase the quality of GME teaching and learning, due to a lack of GME capable individuals on supply registers, it was often impossible to let teachers away for CPD. Essentially, in order to achieve long-term benefit for Gaelic education through CPD, schools felt there would be immediate and short-term consequences for students whose learning would be interrupted when teachers left for conferences and/or workshops.

CPD that did not require teachers to travel for attendance was often recommended by participants, although it was strongly felt that at the core of CPD experiences should be opportunities to network and learn from other GME educators:

*One of the most useful CPD activities... is meeting other teachers who are in a similar position and sharing ideas/resources. This would be really beneficial if it were achievable on a more regular basis, but the geographic spread makes this difficult. A national network of GM primary teachers would be useful.*

Although there is existing CPD for Gaelic educators hosted on the virtual community, GLOW, several teachers noted that “this tool can be frustrating to use.”

Several of the individuals with whom we spoke were unappreciative of CPD marketed for Gaelic either delivered in English and/or based on the experience of only English medium educators: “I don’t understand why they’re doing it for us when it’s not specifically about Gaelic.”

Similarly, some teachers were critical of the value of inputs on bilingual education at a very generic level, and even suggested that training on immersion education based on the experiences of educators of majoritised languages were of questionable relevance to Gaelic medium.

In summary, when asked about CPD, the input we received from those involved in Gaelic education rarely focussed on the content or quality of provision, but most frequently addressed the frustration encountered by teacher trying to access provision.

“One of the most useful CPD activities... is meeting other teachers who are in a similar position...”

Primary GME teacher



## INTEREST IN POST-QUALIFICATION KNOWLEDGE AND DEVELOPMENT

In our survey, we asked Gaelic teachers to tell us their level of interest in a range of post-qualification knowledge and CPD areas. This question was only asked of teachers who were currently working schools, and we had 63 responses to the question. The responses to this question, are illustrated in the table below:

<i>Type of training</i>	<i>Very Un-interested</i>	<i>Un-interested</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Interested</i>	<i>Very Interested</i>
In new materials	3%	2%	8%	43%	<b>44%</b>
Gaelic language	12%	12%	<b>30%</b>	23%	23%
Advanced language in Gaelic literacy	10%	7%	13%	32%	<b>38%</b>
Gaelic Learners in the Primary School	20%	<b>27%</b>	15%	<b>27%</b>	10%
To teach Gaelic as an additional language	15%	25%	<b>29%</b>	24%	7%
For Gaelic Medium Primary	19%	<b>24%</b>	22%	19%	16%
For Gaelic Medium Secondary	17%	25%	<b>30%</b>	21%	8%
Subject training for Gaelic Medium secondary	20%	27%	<b>29%</b>	14%	11%

This data suggests that teachers' keenest interest for CPD is in becoming acquainted with materials that can be used in a Gaelic education context, and in further development of literacy skills; these interests were strongly reiterated in interviews. Comments throughout the survey as well as discussions in interviews suggest that, for teachers, the concept of "literacy" could mean students' development of literacy (often involving phonics), or the teachers' own literacy skills (particularly with reference to grammar).

In response to this survey, teachers also listed any specific subjects for which they would want CPD, and the following suggestions were provided: Biology, Drama, English, French, Geography (suggested by 3 individuals), Guidance, Health and Wellbeing, History (suggested by 6 individuals), Maths, Modern Studies (suggested by 4 individuals), Religious and Moral Education (suggested by 2 individuals).



Although the data in this table is interesting, it does fail to give a functional indication of what Gaelic educators would like to see offered in CPD provision. It was during interview that a richer picture of teachers' desires for CPD was formed.

During interviews, teachers told us that CPD should be devised to address issues of specific relevance to Gaelic, not only in terms of resources and language development, but also in terms of:

- supporting English home-language students in an immersion context;
- keeping Gaelic the language of the classroom;
- working with pupils whose first language is Gaelic;
- accounting for class composition (e.g. multi-composite, particularly large and/or particularly small);
- identifying and working with children with Additional Support Needs through Gaelic medium;
- further Gaelic Medium training for secondary specialisms.

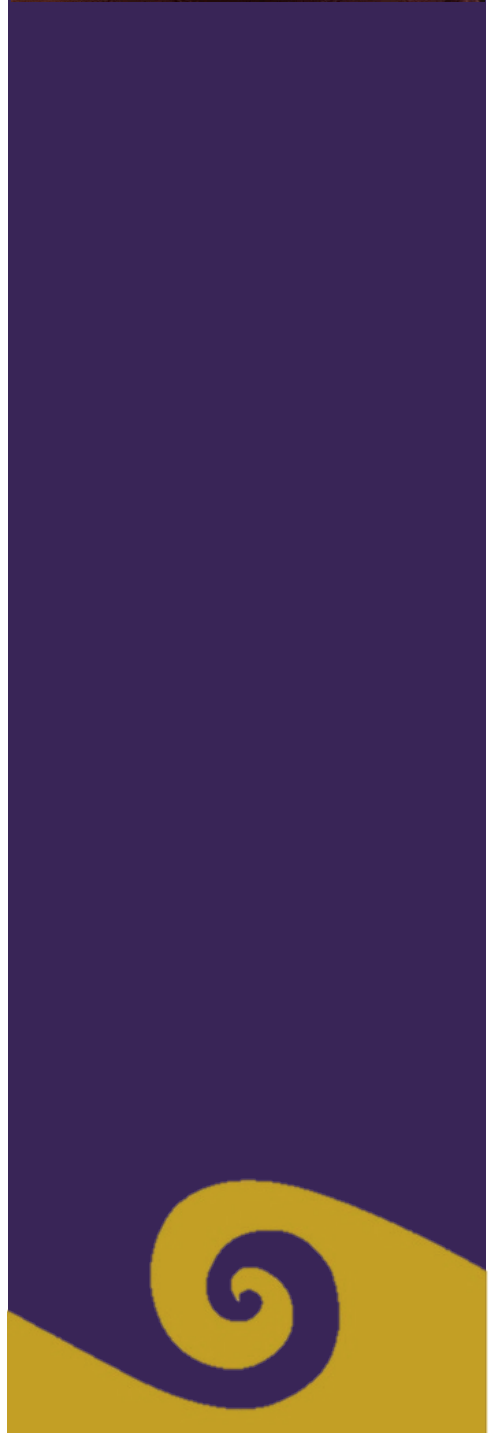
Teachers wanted CPD to be specifically catered towards GME, and to provide them with tactics, techniques, and activities that could be used with their students.

It seemed to be the case that teachers valued the networking opportunities provided by Stòrlann, Education Scotland and Bòrd na Gàidhlig highly, specifically because when they were able to meet with their peers they could ask one another how to deal with a variety of situations encountered in the classroom. The desire to use CPD to network with other Gaelic educators was often stronger for teachers who worked in more remote regions and/or for those who were the sole Gaelic educator within their school or local authority.

### GAELIC EDUCATION NETWORKS

Alongside questions pertaining specifically to CPD provision, we asked Gaelic educators about their interest in advertising of Gaelic education networks. Although some networks do exist (e.g. through GLOW), interviews quickly demonstrated that many teachers were simply not aware of networking opportunities. When asked to rate their level of interest in the advertising of Gaelic education networks, 27 respondents (out of 61, or 44%) reported to be interested, and 8 respondents (13%) very interested in the proposition.

Through comments and discussion with teachers, the potential usefulness for more active and more specific networks for Gaelic educators was made clear.





## Opportunities and Issues for Gaelic Medium ITE and CPD

When exploring opportunities for a partnership for Gaelic Medium ITE and CPD, we took a number of different research approaches. We began by asking a series of questions in our survey of all respondents, to gather a picture of what seemed to be important to any future developments. We also interviewed key players in Gaelic ITE and CPD across Scotland, including at existing ITE providers at the University of Aberdeen, the University of Strathclyde, and UHI. We spoke to a number of individuals who had research specialism in the area of bilingual and sometimes Gaelic education, and consulted with specialists in Northern Ireland and Wales. Finally, we spoke to SFC and Bòrd na Gàidhlig at various time points.

In this section, we will report on the benefits and concerns respondents had for any future national partnership, and make proposals for three forms of partnership that could be further explored by ITE and CPD providers in the future. The section will begin with a discussion of the players that should be involved in ITE and CPD for GME.

### WHO SHOULD PROVIDE ITE & CPD TUITION?

We were interested to know who Gaelic educators and other stakeholders would want to be providing ITE, and for CPD provision and asked several questions geared toward this topic within our survey.

The questions concerning tutors was open to all respondents with involvement in Gaelic education. In this instance, a prompt was used to help guide respondents toward an answer, and the examples of “Gaelic speaking tutors” and “non-Gaelic speaking subject specialists” were provided. These examples had a clear influence on the kinds of responses given, with 55 individuals, out of the 96 who answered, recommending “Gaelic speaking tutors,” or “Gaelic speaking specialists.”

While the question was clearly influenced by the prompts provided, it is interesting to note that a strong majority of respondents specifically clarified that it should be Gaelic educators who provide ITE tuition. Many teachers, as opposed to other stakeholders, placed emphasis on the need for ITE tutors to have had experience working within a Gaelic medium context.

Although there was a clear focus on the importance of Gaelic language and Gaelic Medium teaching experience in the answers provided by respondents, some individuals were more inclusive in their recommendation for tutors. For example, one teacher suggested that tuition should be provided by “Gaelic speaking tutors, non-Gaelic subject specialists, bilingualism specialists – anyone who can teach us new things that we can take into the classroom.”

We asked about the kinds of people who should be providing ITE and CPD for Gaelic in another question, where we asked individuals to rate the importance of a series of statements. One-hundred and twenty individuals answered this question, from all stakeholder groups, including teachers. The answers to these questions are illustrated in the table below:

<i>If a national partnership to help support ITE and CPD for Gaelic Medium, how important would the following be?</i>	<i>Very Un-important</i>	<i>Un-important</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Important</i>	<i>Very Important</i>
<b>Tutors to have research experience</b>	4%	12%	27%	<b>40%</b>	18%
<b>Tutors to have teaching experience in Scottish primary or secondary schools</b>	0%	1%	4%	27%	<b>68%</b>
<b>Tutors to have teaching experience in Gaelic Medium Education</b>	1%	0%	2%	17%	<b>81%</b>
<b>Tutors to have specialist knowledge of bilingual education</b>	2%	0%	7%	33%	<b>59%</b>

What can be seen in these answers, is that of greatest importance across all stakeholder groups was that tutors have experience of teaching in GME. The proportion of respondents who rated this as being “very important” is clearly swayed by the large number of teachers who responded to our survey, but it is interesting to note that experience of GME was regarded as being much more important, as compared to knowledge of bilingual education more generally. Of least importance was for tutors to have experience in research. This might suggest that there should be increased scope and flexibility for teaching fellows to provide tuition within Gaelic ITE. It should also be noted that several people clarified that for subject specialisms with secondary, ITE tuition should not have to be from Gaelic-speaking tutors.



## WHICH HEIs SHOULD PROVIDE ITE & CPD TUITION?

In addition to wanting to know about what sort of tutors might be most desirable as Gaelic ITE providers, we were interested to know which HEIs Gaelic educators and other stakeholders would want to be involved in ITE and CPD provision. We addressed this issue through the following survey question: “Who should issue degrees/diplomas/certificates for Gaelic Medium ITE/CPD?” We also discussed this topic in interviews with a variety of stakeholders.

Sixty-seven individuals responded to this question on our survey, and the largest proportion of these (27%) simply suggested that a university or ITE provider (16%) should issue degrees, diplomas and/or certificates for Gaelic Medium ITE and CPD. A few people recommended that Bòrd na Gàidhlig should assume this responsibility, although this would not be feasible. Of the named HEIs within the responses provided, it was UHI partner Sabhal Mòr Ostaig that was most frequently mentioned, although it was only mentioned by four respondents. In interview, some stakeholder strongly argued for UHI to assume leadership in a national partnership. However, it was more common for respondents to clarify that it was not the particular HEI that was of relevance, but rather the quality of ITE that could be provided: “so long as [they are] suitably qualified, any institution,” and “which[ever] institution is in the strongest position regarding ITE.”

When we spoke with individuals about this same topic in interview, a less inclusive picture began to form. There was acknowledgement that the HEIs with the human resources to be able to provide tuition in Gaelic should participate in ITE and CPD, to a greater or lesser extent. This meant that there was potential for a national partnership to form that included more than just the University of Aberdeen, the University of Strathclyde and UHI. Indeed, there was a great deal of enthusiasm from individuals within several ITE providers for a national partnership, including some that do not currently provide Gaelic ITE.

A number of interview participants felt that the University of Aberdeen, the University of Strathclyde and UHI’s Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and Lews Castle College should assume the lead roles in provision on account of their experience and expertise in the area. It is worthwhile noting that these individuals did not, necessarily, have a vested-interest in the aforementioned HEIs. For example, some potential gatekeepers to a national partnership suggested that any national partnership that did not include these three partners would be problematic: “it would be very surprising if they weren’t involved.”

Assuming Aberdeen, Strathclyde and UHI's involvement through Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and Lews Caste College, there seems to be a strong desire across HEIs to enter into discussions for a national partnership. As one participant explained, it is already the case that there are

*[d]eveloping discussions between all of the actors in HEIs about what might be done next, and thinking about developing a national strategy amongst themselves. The enthusiasm and goodwill coming forward from that is very promising.*

From the perspective of some providers of ITE, however, these discussions may not seem to be so inclusive. There has not been a ITE-wide invitation to discuss Gaelic ITE/CPD.

Some respondents suggested that ITE should extend to Edinburgh University and/or Glasgow University, where there are strong opportunities to learn and develop Gaelic in adjoining Celtic departments and in local Gaelic schools. This is a particularly strong suggestion considering the recent publication of The Donaldson Report,<sup>9</sup> which recommends the kind of concurrent MA Education with Gaelic model that is already being used at Aberdeen, and that could be introduced at Edinburgh and Glasgow.

However, several respondents were reticent about the ability to sustain ITE programmes for Gaelic at any more HEIs without partnership: "We can't go on the way we have been, where essentially it's being divided up... I don't see the viability in terms of student numbers and student experience."

Particularly if more HEIs begin to provide ITE for Gaelic, it was suggested by many within key and influential stakeholder groups that there must be a national recruitment strategy that is adhered to by individual institutions. One stakeholder described in interview how the only way Gaelic ITE and CPD training "can survive" is on a "partnership model," on account of limited finances and resources, including those with the ability to provide instruction within HEIs, and the number of individuals who might like to access provision.

"The enthusiasm and goodwill coming forward... is very promising."

Representative from Stakeholder Group



## HOW SHOULD ITE & CPD BE DELIVERED?

At present, those who are interested in accessing Gaelic ITE and CPD have several options regarding the way in which this education will be delivered. Learners can participate in campus-based delivery, or may opt for blended-learning options that incorporate both virtual learning environments (VLEs) and face-to-face teaching. Finally, and specifically for CPD provision, some learners may study entirely through a VLE. It is also the case that many Gaelic education programmes of study (whether for ITE or CPD) will have small numbers of participants and, as has been previously discussed, the amount of Gaelic used in delivery can vary greatly.

We wanted to learn about the way in which Gaelic educators and stakeholders would like ITE and CPD to be delivered through a national partnership. We asked about location of delivery, class size, and language of delivery, as well as accreditation for learning and previous learning. The answers given to these questions by our 123 respondents are illustrated in the table below:

<i>If a national partnership to help support ITE and CPD for Gaelic Medium, how important would the following be?</i>	<i>Very Unimportant</i>	<i>Unimportant</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Important</i>	<i>Very Important</i>
Small class sizes	1%	12%	<b>36%</b>	30%	22%
One central campus for teaching	8%	28%	<b>48%</b>	10%	8%
Teaching offered on multiple campuses	4%	6%	<b>40%</b>	39%	11%
Blended learning options	1%	3%	41%	<b>46%</b>	10%
Distance learning options	0%	4%	16%	<b>46%</b>	34%
Degrees, diplomas or certificates to be issued by any existing ITE provider	1%	2%	40%	<b>42%</b>	16%
Credit to be given for CPD courses	1%	2%	11%	<b>59%</b>	28%
Credit to be given for forms of prior learning	1%	1%	16%	<b>54%</b>	29%
All modules/classes taught in Gaelic Medium	2%	3%	7%	41%	<b>48%</b>



What the data collected in our online survey suggests, is that there is a modest preference for small class sizes in Gaelic ITE and CPD provision. However, respondents did not feel strongly that one central campus for delivery was important, and even showed some preference for multi-campus provision. Educators and other stakeholders seemed consider flexibility in provision to be of great importance, with 46% rating blended learning options as being important, and 10% rating these options as being very important. Ratings of importance for were stronger for distance learning options, with 80% of respondents rating this as being either important or very important. This strongly suggests that any developments towards a national partnership for Gaelic Medium ITE and CPD should facilitate distance learning options, and build upon existing distance learning provision in the area.

Again, a large majority of respondents indicated that being given credit for CPD courses was of importance (59%) or great importance (28%). A similar proportion of respondents believed that it was important or very important to be given credit for forms of prior learning. This may suggest that CPD provision, in particular, should strive to acknowledge educators' prior experience and learning and reward their efforts thorough formal certificate, diploma or degree awards. GTCS may also need to be included in these processes to ensure teachers are given due credit for their CPD efforts.

The question which elicited the clearest results concerned the language of delivery for ITE and CPD. In total, 89% of our respondents indicated that it was important or very important for all modules or courses to be delivered through Gaelic Medium. While this may be a difficult target to achieve, respondents gave a very clear indication of their language preference for the national partnership, and the desire for Gaelic to be used as a medium of instruction in ITE and CPD should be seriously considered by providers.



“The loss of opportunities to undertake dual qualification has been disastrous for small schools and for individuals...”

Representative from Stakeholder Group

### WHAT CONTENT SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN ITE & CPD?

Previous research and reports on the subject of Gaelic education have recommended that efforts should be made to support the training of teachers to provide GME in the following subjects (and particularly at Secondary): General Science, Geography, History, Maths, Modern Studies,<sup>4</sup> as well as ICT.<sup>12</sup> Respondents to this research suggested that, in addition to these subjects, it would be useful for CPD to help support the following subjects: Biology, Drama, English, French, Guidance, Health and Wellbeing, Religious and Moral Education.

Increasingly, initial-stage, NQT and QTs at secondary are encouraged to train to teach two subjects, and this was formerly a possible ITE route for students at Aberdeen and Strathclyde Universities. However, Strathclyde has removed this dual specialism option, which may ultimately restrict the variety of subjects available to students of GME.

Several survey participants and some of those interviewed also suggested that the dual-qualification that has previously allowed primary GME teachers to also provide GME teaching at the S1 and S2 levels should be reintroduced:

*The loss of opportunities to undertake dual qualification has been disastrous for small schools and for individuals as it restricts how they can be deployed post S2 for certificated classes and job opportunities are restricted.*

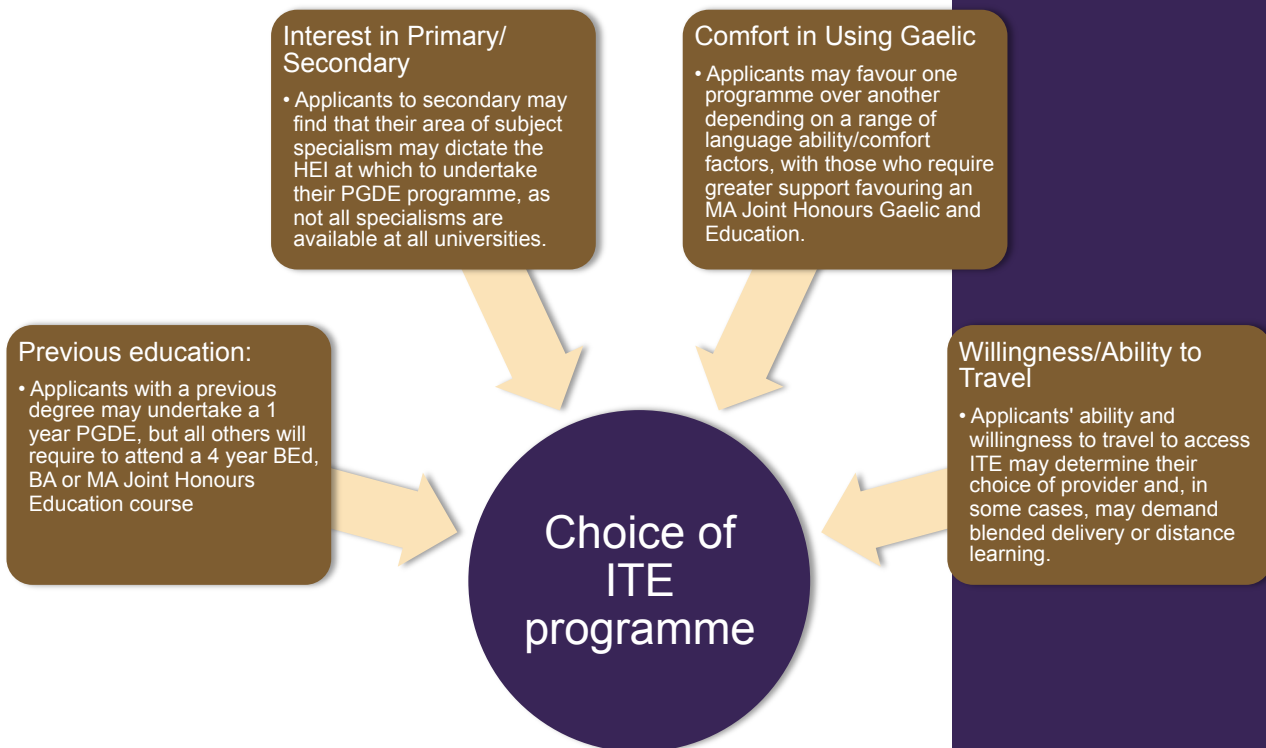
In addition to the aforementioned subject areas and the need to re-explore opportunities for dual-qualification, teachers who participated in the research expressed the desire to have further training in the following areas (as previously discussed in this report):

- Additional Support Needs
- Assessment
- Comfort to use Gaelic
- Demands of GME contexts
- Early literacy development
- Grammar
- Immersion contexts
- Subject-specific vocabulary
- Teaching resources

## MARKET OF POTENTIAL-TEACHERS

One of the key areas in which a national partnership can offer Gaelic education benefit is in relation to the recruitment of potential Gaelic teachers. A phrase used to describe what was required for recruitment to Gaelic ITE by numerous respondents was, “joined-up thinking” and several individuals suggested that there was a imperative need for a national recruitment strategy, and that a national partnership could be fundamental to implementing such a strategy.

Numerous respondents explained to us in interview about the “penny numbers” in Gaelic ITE programmes. The perception seems to be that there is a small pool of individuals nationally who might be interested and qualified to undertake ITE for Gaelic education. One of the fears expressed by several of our respondents was that expansion of the Gaelic ITE provision could saturate the market and expose existing provisions to criticism for even smaller cohorts.



If we assume that all ITE provision is of equal quality and reputation, there are several factors that need to be taken into consideration when considering what kind of recruitment policy and/or provision should be supported in a national partnership. These factors are illustrated in the diagram above and include: previous education, interest in primary/secondary, comfort in using Gaelic, and willingness/ability to travel.

## PROPOSALS FOR A NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP

At present, there is no single proposal outlining the form a national partnership for Gaelic Medium ITE or CPD would take. What this section of the report aims to do, is propose varying forms (in terms of language of delivery, leadership and partnership), that a national partnership could adopt.

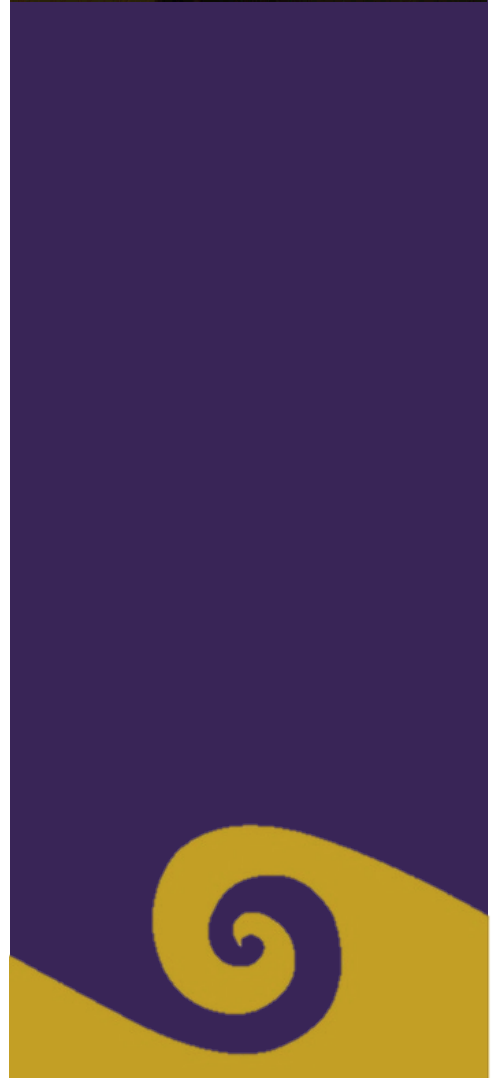
Suggestions have been made for strong, moderate and weak partnership features in each of these aforementioned areas. It should be noted that the descriptions of strong, moderate and weak should not be regarded as synonymous with good, acceptable, and poor. There are many logistical issues that need to be taken into consideration if and when a national partnership is taken forward, and this may dictate form such a partnership takes.

	Language	Leadership	Partnership
Strong	Gaelic to be used exclusively as medium of delivery for ITE and CPD	Funding to be allocated from SFC to sustain a partnership co-ordinator in order to oversee management issues across HEIs	HEIs to collaborate on ITE recruitment policy, and in the delivery of ITE and CPD to ensure highest quality provision.
Moderate	Gaelic to be used for a majority of ITE or CPD delivery	Coordination to be led by a partnership committee of nominated or elected members chosen from HEI partners	HEIs to consider recruitment market stability, and to consider collaborative ITE and CPD provision, with no national policy enforced.
Weak	Gaelic to be used for the GTCS target of 50% for ITE delivery, and for CPD delivery where possible	Coordination to be guided by a partnership committee of volunteer members from HEI partners. All partners to have equal say in committee recommendations.	HEIs to report on recruitment and “best practice” for delivery at partnership meetings.

Representatives at ITE providers also suggested the following issues would need to be addressed through collaboration in order to ensure a national partnership works efficiently, not only for the provision of high quality ITE and CPD for Gaelic educators, but also to ensure that there is greater understanding of Gaelic education in general:

- All members of faculty within Schools and Departments of Education need to be given increased awareness and knowledge of Gaelic education within Scotland;
- All ITE programmes should make substantive commitments to include awareness about Gaelic, and awareness about Gaelic education in the core curriculum;
- Partners contributing teaching jointly across HEIs must coordinate placement and teaching schedules;
- Partners contributing teaching jointly across HEIs must ensure assessment procedures will be transferable;
- The responsibility to coordinate a national partnership cannot become a voluntary responsibility of participating individuals, but must be accounted for within the relevant individual's activity plan.

There was some debate as to whether or not a national partnership required the membership of all ITE providers. Some individuals felt that only those HEIs with the human resources to contribute to Gaelic education should participate. Others, felt that all ITE providers should participate and should be required to make meaningful commitments to include Gaelic as a part of ITE.



## FUNDING CONSIDERATIONS

Although decisions of the funding of any future national partnership for the provision of ITE and CPD for Gaelic Medium will need to be negotiated jointly by all partners, it is worthwhile highlighting some of the main concerns raised in relation to funding by stakeholders. Most stakeholders interviews and with knowledge of ITE and CPD provision felt that Scottish Funding Council (SFC) would need to be the prime funder for any partnership in its initial years.

There are two main ways to access SFC funding for Gaelic education at the HE level. The first, is through funds earmarked for Gaelic, and the process of applying for these funds requires those interested in accessing funds to track-down the member of SFC staff responsible for Gaelic. There is no formal application process or pro-forma, nor is there clear guidance on the kinds of applications that will be considered a priority, how the application will be assessed, how much funding can or should be sought, or the time scale the Council will follow when processing applications.

The Council maintains this degree of flexibility to ensure that all applications are given due consideration regardless of when they are proposed, and to ensure that all proposed initiatives can be modified in an informal consultation process to increase the likelihood of being accepted and awarded funds. Although this process has been designed to help increase the likelihood of success, it can result in frustration on the part of those who seek funding, particularly when non-specialists within SFC seek changes that are not coherent with what would be regarded as “best practice” for the development of GME by bilingual education specialists.

Applications for Gaelic funds must not seek too little funding from SFC, or the Council will suggest that the relevant HEI or HEIs find their own means of paying for the initiative. If the applications seek a large amount of funding, they are no longer considered within the earmarked funds for Gaelic, but within a larger Strategic Investments Programme, which is dealt with by policy staff, and will be considered against National Priorities.

A national partnership for Gaelic Medium ITE and CPD that requires substantial funding would most likely be funded from the SFC’s Strategic Investments Programme, and need to target Ministerial Priorities. Any application would still, however, be fed through those with responsibility for the earmarked Gaelic funds before being taken to the SFC policy committee and would, therefore, be required to pass through the informal application-development process described above.



## Estimating the economic costs of establishing a national partnership

Unlike the provision of marketed goods, there are complications when aiming to estimate the costs of providing support to minority languages – such as in the present case as we are considering alternative arrangements for the provision of ITE and CPD.

The standard approach to evaluating the costs of any policy would normally be to calculate the monetary value of the resources devoted to the policy. However, evaluating the costs of pursuing the various outcomes proposed in this case is a somewhat more complex exercise than simply adding up expenditure on the various inputs.

Expenditures relate to the inputs into a policy whereas costs attach themselves to the direct *outputs* or outcomes of the possible alternative approaches. In the case of producing more GME teachers, several inputs will be used – but difficulties arise when these inputs are used jointly for several outputs. So, in this case a common input, such as CPD training for Gaelic medium teachers, will often be delivered through the medium of English, and with little change this could be adapted to help train future English medium teachers.

The problem of costing the outcome can perhaps also be seen by the fact that not all teachers who go through this route, will finally become GM teachers – some (as has been shown) will, at the end of the process, prefer to become teachers within an English medium school.

This means that the total and average costs of delivering various elements of education and training for GME teachers cannot be reduced to a simple comparison with equivalent English language teachers.

An additional issue ironically hinges on the success of the process. A successful increase in output of GME teachers, which induces a rise in demand for GME in general may also mean it is impossible to satisfy this demand – which may generate frustration in the parents of potential GME pupils unable to get places in Gaelic education. Likewise however *not producing* the number of trained teachers needed in GME would involve further alienation experienced by members of the Gaelic speaking community, unable to be educated in their own language, due to a lack of trained teachers.

...not producing the number of trained teachers needed in GME would involve further alienation experienced by members of the Gaelic speaking community...



These elements of uncertainty in forecasting dynamic change in the market for teachers are not unique to Gaelic medium, but they are exacerbated because of the current relatively low levels of supply and demand. In this environment, there are advantages in embedding flexibility into possible delivery mechanisms. We would therefore suggest that in the absence of detailed financial figures for the various options being presently considered, having a *networked* approach with several institutions able to manage the generation of GME teachers would seem to offer the best opportunity to utilise flexibility throughout the system.

A final issue which needs to be acknowledged and where there may be scope for further research, is how to value the *final* desired output of this process. After all, this is not about only the production of skilled teachers, but rather is also about the impact on the level of minority language spoken, through successfully putting pupils through GME, and thus contributing to a rejuvenated and revitalised language community, where the hours of Gaelic spoken have increased as a result of the adoption of a successful and far sighted policy towards ITE and CPD.

If this was possible to calculate, then the most *efficient* policy for providing ITE and CPD could therefore be evaluated by looking at the least cost per unit of language use – itself a long term outcome spread over many years. Given these difficulties it is therefore clear that a robust calculating of the effectiveness of alternative policies in linguistic environments will be a longer term, more difficult process, and that at present, simplifying assumptions must be made within the process.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The research collected for this report strongly suggests that there would be benefit to creating a national partnership for GME ITE and CPD. The form that this partnership should take should be negotiated jointly by all HEIs presently involved in ITE provision, and with the input of all other HEI providers with interest in supporting ITE and CPD provision for Gaelic education in a collaborative manner.

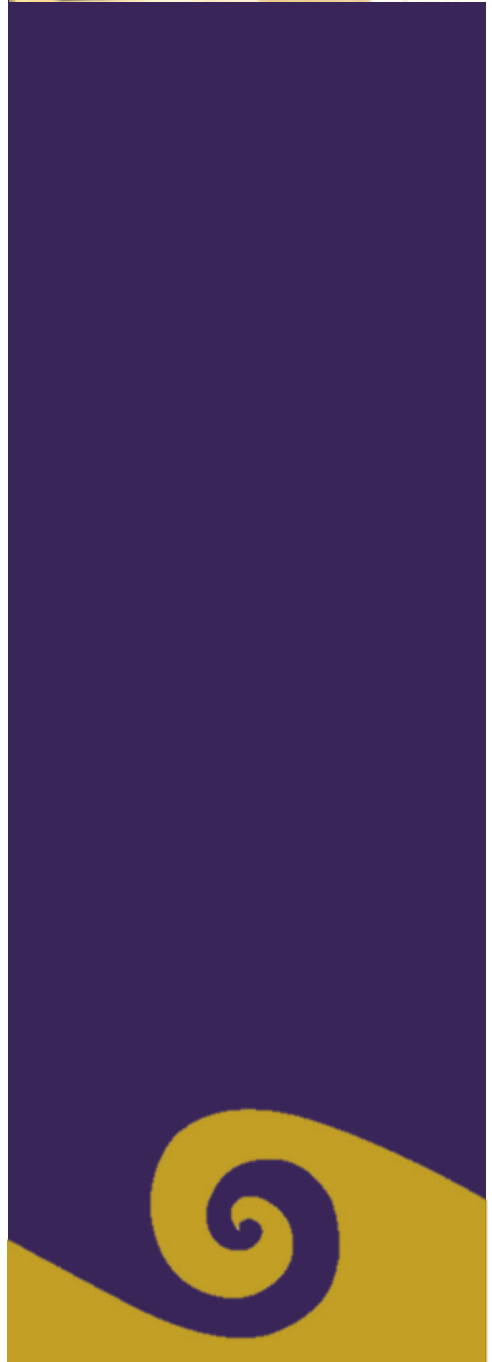
Participants in our interviews and survey seemed generally to be favourably disposed to the proposition of a national partnership. As one respondent explained,

*Gaelic medium education last year celebrated 25 years since its inception. In that time very little progress has been made due to the intransigence of the existing colleges/universities. A complete new start is needed to ensure that teachers are taught through the medium of the language in which they are going to operate.*

However, there was some trepidation among stakeholders that a national partnership that was seen to be ineffectual or impermanent could have negative consequences on Gaelic education. Many stakeholder sought a partnership that could be guaranteed to operate for many years, rather than one that might be disbanded after initial funding commitments expired.

When planning future provision for Gaelic ITE and CPD, we recommend that a national partnership give heed to the following:

- Amount of Gaelic medium input to be increased in ITE and CPD;
- Amount of input specifically about teaching in immersion contexts for minoritised languages to be increased in ITE;
- Increased amount of CPD provision directly targeted at GME teachers;
- ITE and CPD to give greater attention to early literacy development in Gaelic, including use of phonics in teaching;
- ITE and CPD to give more support for specialist vocabulary;
- ITE and CPD to give Gaelic educators increased opportunities to become acquainted with teaching resources;
- Increased opportunities for initial-stage teachers to build



- comfort in Gaelic language use;
- Increased ITE and CPD opportunities for advanced Gaelic grammar;
  - Increase contact with GME contexts within ITE;
  - National partnerships for GME teachers to be supported through accessible virtual community;
  - CPD to target assessment in GME;
  - Opportunities for dual primary and secondary certification to be re-explored;
  - Negotiations to be undertaken with SFC to clarify and standardise the route for accessing funds for Gaelic education.

Any ITE or CPD provision aimed specifically at Gaelic educators should make concerted efforts to increase the proportion of Gaelic medium input, although ITE may opt to maintain some English input so that teachers retain their dual-certification to teach in English and Gaelic contexts.

Our research strongly suggests that provisions should continue to seek flexible entry-points into Gaelic education, and should offer QTs working in Gaelic education flexible ways to engage with CPD. It is insufficient for teachers to only be able to attend a Gaelic CPD conference once every three years when they can be released by their head teachers without causing disruption to regularly scheduled classes. All teachers should have access to and support for CPD, and should be actively encouraged to network and share best-practice with their peers. The current virtual communities established to foster this development are insufficient, and investment should be made to improve access to CPD using a dedicated Gaelic Medium VLE.

In summary, it had been suggested that, although current ITE and CPD provision for Gaelic educators has been positively evaluated by many Gaelic teachers and stakeholders, there would be benefits associated with a national partnership and with collaborative working between HEIs, GTCS, Local Authorities, other special interest groups (like Bòrd na Gàidhlig and Stòrlann). However, at the centre of all discussions and future planning should be the experiences of Gaelic educators and the needs they perceive to exist in the provision of ITE and CPD for Gaelic.

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