

Bòrd na Gàidhlig

Brath Naidheachd
Press Release



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BÒRD NA GÀIDHLIG WELCOMES CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

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Bòrd na Gàidhlig, the Gaelic development agency, has welcomed confirmation that new career pathways and research opportunities will be created in Gaelic studies through the allocation by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) of £5.28 million for research into the support and revitalisation of the Gaelic language and culture.

The investment will be shared among four Scottish higher education institutions in the latest academic research pooling initiative. Arthur Cormack, Chair of Bòrd na Gàidhlig, today welcomed the SFC initiative which was confirmed by Minister for Education Mike Russell MSP in the Annual Sabhal Mòr Lecture in Skye

Mr Cormack said: “Bòrd na Gàidhlig is pleased to support the establishment of Soillse, which offers us all significant new opportunities and directions. It is vital that Gaelic development in the future is underpinned by sound research and planning so that the Bòrd, and other agencies, can make informed decisions as to the initiatives that are most likely to succeed in supporting our delivery of the National Plan for Gaelic for our communities. Not only will the partnership bring together considerable expertise but will create hugely attractive career pathways for emerging talent, through PhD studentships, to engage with Gaelic research into language development now, and in the future.”

Soillse (pronounced SOIL-shuh) which is Gaelic for “enlightenment”, is a research partnership among UHI Millennium Institute (UHIMI) and the Universities of Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow. Bòrd na Gàidhlig’s contribution to the overall cost is £0.54 million. The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) is investing £1.86 million, with £2.48 million being invested by the institutions, and £0.4 million from Highlands and Islands Enterprise. The investment will be used to recruit research staff, create nine PhD studentships based across the partner institutions, with at least four to be in collaboration with Gaelic stakeholders, and contribute to the operating costs including establishing a Research Co-ordination Group and an annual conference.

The key function of Soillse will be to inform the Scottish Government’s economic and social priorities for Gaelic. The four institutions will work in partnership with key

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agencies, such as Bòrd na Gàidhlig, to share the information gleaned from their research to inform national and local efforts to maintain and reverse the decline of the Gaelic language, and encourage the use of Gaelic in areas other than the Highlands and Island where it has not been traditionally spoken since the Middle Ages.

Arthur Cormack added: “It is vital that we highlight the benefits that investment in Gaelic are creating and that this type of project, offering students high quality research positions in academic institutions in their own communities, is recognised for what it is. The creation of Soillse will enable us all to show how our initiatives and support mechanisms are working and how we need to target our efforts to grow the use of Gaelic throughout our communities. Soillse will help us offer a framework and climate within which we can develop the language through increased usage at all levels, in as wide a range of activities as possible. These new opportunities at a time of harsh economic reality are of huge benefit to our communities.”