

Bòrd na Gàidhlig Response to Final Reports on:  
Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment and the Independent Review  
of the Skills Delivery Landscape

### **It's Our Future: Hayward Review Report on Qualifications and Assessment**

Bòrd na Gàidhlig would like to commend very highly the inclusion of issues relating to Gaelic Medium Education (GME) within the report. This is positive evidence that reflection on the issues relating to the GME system has already begun and that continuous progress can now be made to deliver effective change for all Scotland's learners. In particular we commend the following:

- "Malcolm's Journey" is a welcome example of how the SDA might operate within the GME sector (p121)
- GME representation across the structures supporting It's Our Future including the CCG Framework: Learners' Group / Parent and Carers' Group/ Head teachers' Group / Teachers' Group / National Agencies / Inclusion and Equity Group / Public and Third Sector Employers' Group.
- The inclusion of GME within Review Activity - Gaelic-medium Education Stakeholders Group
- Visits to schools with GME as part of the School and College Visits Programme
- Focus on GME Learners noted (p134) clearly states that GME learners and teachers "must be involved in helping to design and develop detail of the Diploma".

Overall, we recognise the considerable advantages to the Scottish Education system that the Scottish Diploma of Achievement (SDA) will deliver for learners.

It is crucial that there is a clear understanding from the outset that Scotland provides Early Years, Primary and Secondary Education in two languages, either through the medium of English (EME) or through the medium of Gaelic (GME). Subsequently all actions and strategic planning should reflect this reality. This will support an important aspect of the "shared vision signed up to by all stakeholders" (Putting Learners at the Centre, p14).

The realisation of the Integrity Model of Change, outlined in Chapter 2 will depend, in part on the establishment of a clear understanding that there are these two types of provision in Scotland, GME and EME, and that young people in both systems are entitled to equity.

We have provided detailed comments and proposals for each of the 26 recommendations to support a wider understanding of how this shared vision will impact positively on the GME system.

The SDA has three sections with several opportunities and challenges arising for the GME system within each of the sections. There are clear challenges in developing wider subject study programmes as part of the Programmes of Learning. In some settings the Programmes of Learning will be in both English and Gaelic at various stages. Further progress will be required from Local Authorities and national agencies. The National Gaelic Language Plan 2023-28 and Local Authority Gaelic Language Plans will be important mechanisms for delivering faster progress in this area. The Gaelic Language Plan 2022-27 of the Scottish Government also provides an important context for national leadership as noted below:

<b>High Level Aim</b>	<b>The Scottish Government will seek to embed Gaelic in all new education policy initiatives.</b>
Current Practice	The Scottish Government is committed to the growth of Gaelic education at all levels and therefore considers Gaelic needs as policies are developed.
Scottish Government Gaelic Language Plan, 2022-27	<p>The Scottish Government will continue to reflect on the needs of Gaelic education and Gaelic learner education at all levels as policies are developed.</p> <p>It is expected that representation from across the Learning Directorate and Reform Directorate will be involved in the proposed Scottish Government Gaelic Language Plan Implementation Group and will therefore ensure that Gaelic is embedded in educational developments.</p> <p>In addition, the Putting Pupils at the Centre Report on Education Reform has suggested how Gaelic can be embedded in future Education bodies and we will work with those involved to ensure Gaelic is represented.</p> <p>More detail on how the Scottish Government is helping support Gaelic through our work is identified in Section 3.</p>
Target Date	by end 2025
Responsibility	Education/Corporate/Gaelic and Scots Division/Communications

Project Learning and the Personal Pathway have the potential to deliver exciting new opportunities for the GME system, for example:

- Using experiences through Gaelic within the Duke of Edinburgh Award, Prince's Trust, John Muir Award, SSERC, and Caritas Award etc. However further work will be required to ensure that the award schemes have Gaelic language materials and advice.
- Providing real life contexts (Project Learning) as noted on p53 of It's Our Future will be both an opportunity and a challenge.
- The comments on Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS) on p55 are worthy of additional reflection within the GME system, so that the additional potential of the bilingual setting can be fully realised.
- Student-centred approaches to learning and teaching – what might this mean in an immersion setting? There are again several additional opportunities and challenges for GME.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig has unique expertise across all aspects of GME and can provide advice in all aspects of national strategic planning.

Although there were some references to GME within the Analysis Reports and Support Materials there are further opportunities to develop greater partnership working between Bòrd na Gàidhlig and the various teams within the Scottish Government working on Education Reform. This will support the delivery of Scotland's commitment to the UNCRC ("...a nation committed to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989)" as stated in the Foreword to It's Our Future). Furthermore, the issues highlighted throughout It's Our Future will reverberate in the National Gaelic Language Plan which is approved by Scottish Ministers and a wide spectrum of Gaelic Language Plans being delivered by public bodies and agreed by Bòrd na Gàidhlig (e.g. National Education Agencies, Local Authorities and the Scottish Government itself).

We have commented below on specific pieces of work connected to It's Our Future and will be happy to engage directly with Education Reform colleagues on how best Bòrd na Gàidhlig can provide additional expertise and assistance.

Documents aligned with It's Our Future:

***Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment***

There was a welcome inclusion of comments relating to GME in 3.2 and 5. Expanding on the range of issues across other sections would have been useful e.g. within different equity sections and the teacher workload and resource section etc.

***Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment Data Analysis Phase 1***

There is inclusion of GME and Gaelic under Scottish Identity but there is a lack of clarity on how this impacted on other sections of the report.

***Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment: Consultation Analysis***

GME Included under Other Themes (p18, p25, p42) but with little impact within the Analysis Report as a whole. It is unclear what the Analysis Report was identifying other than raising a number of questions.

***Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment: The Review and its Key Recommendations***

No mention of issues relating to GME.

***Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment: Phase Three Consultation***

We welcome the comments on p6 re further engagement, and a specific message about GME could have been delivered here. Likewise, on p10 the comments around the Proposed New Model and how this might operate in GME could have been expanded. Gaelic Culture is noted in p12, and context or explanation would have been helpful. We welcome the commitments on p15 including "ensure that all groups with a stake are included".

***Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment Phase 3 Engagement Material***

There was no significant input relating to GME. Opportunities could have been taken across the resource e.g., specific input on Q5 which could have been expanded / tailored and/or additional prompts provided across other questions. There was a mention under Personal Pathway under Cultural, but it lacks context or explanation. It is unclear how the resource could have been used in the GME sector.

It will be important that the GME system is represented and considered within all the strategic planning undertaken as a consequence of It's Our Future. We recommend that as each initiative is planned there is reflection at the outset on the impact on GME and subsequently detailed action points agreed, along the lines already established for equality issues. In addition to the inclusion of GME in all strategic planning, we recommend that a GME Specific Focus Group is set up to support coordinated work across work-streams and initiatives. This may be similar to the structure already established supporting It's Our Future – possibly an expanded version of the CCG.

We recommend this include representation from the following, as a core (with additional representation planned by the core group):

- Bòrd na Gàidhlig

- National Education Agencies
- Comann nam Pàrant Nàiseanta
- GME teacher representation including CLAS (Comann Luchd-Teagaisg Àrd Sgoiltean, Gaelic Secondary Teachers Association)
- Education Reform Team, Scottish Government
- Gaelic and Scots Division, Scottish Government

This structure will support a better understanding of issues and the creation of clear action points. Examples of overarching issues might include the following:

- “Putting Learners at the Centre...elicited clear messages from practitioners and stakeholders about the need for cultural and mindset change”. There was a wide range of comments and proposals on Gaelic and GME, which we very much welcomed in the report.
- Question posed: p13 “how might qualifications and assessment evolve to ensure that every learner in Scotland gets the best possible life chance”. As part of any response the GME perspective should be included.
- Covid Impact – “disadvantaged backgrounds” p19. We noted a range of comments in this section. There has been a specific impact on GME and immersion education, which will require further consideration.
- Review lessons learned p48 – there will be particular issues arising within the GME sector relating to for example, resource issues, roles and responsibilities, teachers developing and sharing standards etc.
- International reference points re immersion education should be explored further so that practice in Scotland is recognised as high quality – this might include reflection on British Columbia French Immersion structures and guidance, the work of Bilingualism Matters, the ongoing research work at the University of Edinburgh and University of Strathclyde.

Across the 26 recommendations we have identified various issues which would also be appropriate for consideration by the different structures developed as a consequence of It’s Our Future.

Recommendation	Additional comments from Bòrd na Gàidhlig
<b>Recommendation 1:</b> Change Qualifications and Assessment in the Senior Phase in Scotland. Change must be carefully planned and resourced.	It would have been useful to identify GME and EME provision in the initial comments. The change process requires to be undertaken with a clear understanding that education is provided in two languages in Scotland and that a majority of Local Authorities deliver GME.
<b>Recommendation 2:</b> Continue the process of cultural change. Scotland should retain the structure of the IRG and allied CCGs as a key method of engagement	Overall we are in agreement and recommend a review of the structure to ensure that the breadth of input required from the GME sector is appropriately gathered. Bòrd na Gàidhlig will be happy to input to a review.
<b>Recommendation 3:</b> Work in partnership with countries with similar	Overall we are in agreement and recommend further expansion to include

<p>aspirations to Scotland to develop qualifications and assessment.</p>	<p>international perspectives on Bilingual and Immersion Education so that Scotland builds on research and expertise in other countries.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 4:</b> Adopt the Vision and Principles proposed in this Review into policy and practice.</p>	<p>Overall we are in agreement and note the following:  <i>“this should include learners, parents/carers, teachers/lecturers, national bodies, colleges, employers, universities and voluntary sector”</i>(p59)  As noted in the report itself and throughout this submission, this should always include perspectives on GME from each of these groups listed and from Local Authorities, many of whom are delivering Gaelic Language Plans which impact directly on GME delivery.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 5:</b> Adopt the SDA as the new approach to qualifications and assessment.</p>	<p>Overall we are in agreement and note the following:  <i>“All learners must be offered the chance to experience learning in all elements of the Diploma. This should be viewed as an entitlement.”</i>  Detailed reflection and a national agreement on a set of developments are now required to deliver the entitlement within the GME sector.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 6:</b> Use the SDA as a graduation certificate for all Senior Phase educational settings.</p>	<p>Overall we are in agreement and welcome the inclusion of specific reference to GME (including relating to digital profiling) and note the following:  <i>“All learners must be offered the chance to experience learning in respect of all elements of the Diploma. This should be viewed as an entitlement.”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>All elements of the Diploma should be accessible to Gaelic Medium Learners.</i></li> <li>• <i>The digital profile must be fully accessible for all learners and available in Gaelic and other minority languages.”</i></li> </ul> <p>Considerable reflection and planning will now be important to devise new methods of delivery appropriate for the GME sector to ensure the entitlement is provided in both GME and EME. E-learning as whole including e-Sgoil has been noted and further clarity on how e-learning platforms deliver aspects of the SDA in GME will be important. Of crucial importance will be not just the technical issues relating to</p>

	digital profiling but the necessary inputs to ensure high quality experiences are recorded in digital profiles.
<p><b>Recommendation 7:</b> Include the Programmes of Learning element as a prerequisite for the award of the Diploma. All learners should be offered a broad range of courses including academic, vocational, professional and technical courses. It is an entitlement.</p>	<p>Overall we are in agreement and specifically note the following in relation to the GME sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Improve progression between the BGE and the Senior Phase and within the Senior Phase in schools and colleges.</i></li> <li>• <i>Broaden the range of assessment methods for National Qualifications in the Senior Phase including increased opportunities for classroom assessment.</i></li> <li>• <i>Increase flexibility by modularising courses and Programmes of Learning.</i></li> </ul> <p>We recommend that there should now be a comprehensive review of how these three elements (along with others) will be delivered within the GME sector. Detailed planning for the GME sector should be integrated into the national planning for the SDA as recommended.</p>

<p><b>Recommendation 8:</b> Include the Personal Pathway element as a prerequisite for the award of the Diploma. It is an entitlement and must be available to all learners.</p> <p><b>Recommendation 9:</b> Use descriptions of knowledge progression and the universal skills framework, in the recently published Skills Review (Withers, 2023), if accepted, to inform the design of Project Learning in the SDA. They should also be used as the basis for assessment.</p> <p><b>Recommendation 10:</b> Include the Project Learning element as a prerequisite for the award of the Diploma. It is an entitlement and must be available to all learners.</p>	<p>Overall we are in agreement with the substance of the recommendation and note the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) We warmly welcome the inclusion of Gaelic culture under cultural activities listed on p68.</li> <li>b) Coaching and mentoring noted on p69 will require specific focus within the GME sector.</li> <li>c) The reflective personal discussion within the GME sector should again be a focus for particular attention.</li> <li>d) The issue of equity is raised in section 4.7. We agree that this will be an important issue to consider and reflect upon between GME and EME provision.</li> <li>e) Opportunities for all learners within workplaces are identified as an issue and again particular reflection should take place relating to the opportunities for young people in GME.</li> <li>f) We welcome the comments on the Withers Report and career advice (p71) including the</li> </ol>
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	<p>commitment to the needs of every learner. It will be important to ensure careers advice is appropriate for every learner in the GME sector (Bòrd na Gàidhlig has provided a response paper on Fit for the Future which should be read in conjunction with this paper).</p> <p>g) We welcome the comments on the new national education bodies noting the following:</p> <p><i>“The New National Bodies ... Should work together with partners, including teachers, lecturers, employers and universities to develop examples of what Project Learning could look like in practice in different contexts” (p73).</i></p> <p>It will be crucial to ensure that all work undertaken addresses the needs of the GME sector as well as EME provision.</p> <p>Furthermore, whenever any aspects of delivery are evaluated relating to the Personal Pathway, evidence bases should include information drawn from both the GME and EME sectors.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 11:</b> Enhance parity of esteem between types of qualifications by recognising as equal all qualifications at the same SCQF level with the same credit points.</p>	<p>Overall we are in agreement with the principle that due recognition is given to all elements of the Diploma and recommend that careful monitoring of how young people in GME engage with the different elements is undertaken to ensure equity of opportunity between EME and GME.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 12:</b> Establish a Cross Sector Commission on Artificial Intelligence (AI)</p>	<p>Overall, we are in agreement that the Scottish Government should convene and lead a Cross-sector commission to develop a shared value position on the future of AI in education and a set of guiding principles for the use of AI. The commission should include representation from the GME sector and as noted in P79 provide</p> <p><i>“clear advice and support for teachers...”</i></p> <p>including teachers in the GME sector.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 13:</b> Create a national plan to make the SDA a reality for all</p>	<p>Overall, we are in agreement that</p> <p><i>“a national plan should be agreed for</i></p>

<p>learners in all educational settings.</p>	<p><i>the introduction and development of the SDA to turn ideas into a reality for all learners in all educational settings. This plan should include resource implications.”</i></p> <p>Specific attention should be paid to the needs of the GME sector within the national plan.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 14:</b> Develop the national plan and the wider process of change in ways that are inclusive and collegial</p>	<p>Overall, we are in agreement that the national plan for the SDA should be based on the Vision and Principles, however the specific context of GME should be more explicitly noted so that there will be</p> <p><i>“a clear indication of how different communities will contribute to making the ideas in the Vision a reality for every learner in Scotland”</i> in relation to learners in GME.</p> <p>We agree that</p> <p><i>“all communities have opportunities to develop an understanding of the new approach to assessment and qualification system in Scotland.”</i></p> <p>This should include both urban and rural GME contexts. We welcome the proposal that</p> <p><i>“the plan should include a review cycle (Recommendation 4) where evidence is gathered from policy and practice to explore the relationship between ideas and practice and to take appropriate action.”</i></p> <p>Evidence on progress within the GME sector should be included from the outset as part of the review cycle.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 15:</b> Introduce the SDA in phases.</p>	<p>Overall we are in agreement with a phased introduction.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 16:</b> Make time available for staff in Education. Education staff need time to access professional learning, to collaborate and to engage with the changes being proposed. Given the unique needs of the GME sector professional</p>	<p>We welcome very much the recognition of “unique needs” of the GME sector and the proposal of specific actions to provide appropriate professional learning.</p>



<p>learning tailored to help support the Diploma for Gaelic speaking learners and educators is crucial.</p>	
<p><b>Recommendation 17:</b> Develop a long-term engagement and communication strategy.</p>	<p>Overall, we are in agreement and recommend this include GME practitioners, young people and their families and the Gaelic-language media.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 18:</b> Build a national strategy for standards.</p>	<p>Overall, we are in agreement that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There should be an agreed national plan to build and sustain local and national standards for qualifications and assessment.</li> </ul> <p>Particular focus will be required on a number of areas relating to GME including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– sharing and discuss examples p93</li> </ul> <p>Teachers must have a good understanding of standards... p93</p> <p>Effective moderation requires a national system p93</p> <p>How bias (race, gender, class and disability) can impact teachers' professional judgment p93 – bilingual young people in immersion provision should also be included.</p>
<p>Recommendation 19: The Scottish Government and the new national education bodies should model cultural change.</p>	<p>As the SDA is developed and introduced, the Scottish Government and the new national education bodies should model cultural change by working collaboratively in ways that recognise and value the contribution of every participant.</p> <p>We welcome this commitment and look forward to a visionary approach to both GME and EME provision.</p>
<p>Recommendation 20: Embed Qualification and Assessment developments clearly and explicitly within the wider reform agenda.</p>	<p>Overall, we welcome this approach and note the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Scottish Government must, as a matter of urgency, communicate a clear narrative that shows how the developments in qualifications and assessment are an integral part of the wider reform agenda.</li> <li>• The Scottish Government should establish collaborative structures to take forward the development of the SDA that mirror those developed during this Review to ensure that all those with an interest in qualifications and assessment continues to be part of the strategy for its realisation.</li> </ul> <p>It will be crucial that the GME sector is included across Education Reform and</p>

	<p>look forward to close partnership working between Bòrd na Gàidhlig and the Education Reform Teams.</p>
<p>Recommendation 21: Design the new national qualifications body to work in partnership with learners, teachers, policy and research communities to:</p>	<p>We welcome this approach and note:</p> <p><i>Extend the range of assessment methods within National Qualifications and identify what other actions might be taken to reduce the potential for rote learning and enhance the learner experience.</i></p> <p><i>Rationalise the existing range of courses to create a clear, coherent offer for learners, parents/carers, schools, colleges, employers and universities.</i></p> <p><i>Build a new approach to qualifications and assessment that has public confidence, is highly regarded nationally and is rigorous but not overly bureaucratic.</i></p> <p>Along with other related issues there will be particular issues relating to, for example:</p> <p>GME assessment methods The range of courses in GME and Local Authority development plans Public confidence in the GME sector (young people, families, professional staff).</p>
<p>Recommendation 22: Ask the new curriculum body in partnership with the new qualifications body to work with learners, teachers, policy and research communities</p>	<p>We broadly welcome the proposal and note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Improve course <b>progression</b> between the BGE and the Senior Phase, and within National Qualifications offered in the Senior Phase.</i></li> <li>• <i>Co-construct and to trial <b>examples of Project Learning</b> in different educational establishments across the country. These examples should be made available to schools and colleges nationally for teachers/lecturers to adapt to their own circumstances.</i></li> <li>• <i>Work with local authorities, schools, colleges, teachers and lecturers to build a <b>national moderation system</b> that is rigorous but proportionate.</i></li> </ul> <p>Specific challenges and opportunities</p>

	will arise within the GME sector, as examples three issues have been identified here (in bold).
Recommendation 23: Ask the Independent Inspectorate (HMIE) to work in partnership with <b>learners, teachers, policy and research communities</b>	<p>We broadly welcome the proposal and note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Ensure the process of inspection effectively supports the introduction of the SDA in ways that are consistent with a collaborative empowered culture.</i></li> <li>• <i>Review practice with researchers and practitioners as the SDA develops and to identify if gaps are emerging between intentions and practices. The evidence emerging from these Reviews should be used formatively to identify actions to re-align the process.</i></li> </ul> <p>As with other comments, from the outset it should be determined that both GME and EME sectors will be included.</p>
Recommendation 24: Establish the SDA as expected practice for teachers:	<p>We broadly welcome the proposal and note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Teacher Education Institutions should work with the GTCS to review their programmes to ensure that newly qualified secondary school teachers and college lecturers are well prepared to work with the different elements of the SDA.</i></li> <li>• <i>As part of their review cycle, GTCS should reflect the need for all secondary teachers to work with the SDA in their Professional Standards.</i></li> <li>• <i>The Teaching Qualification in Further Education (TQFE) providers should review their programmes to ensure that college lecturers are well-prepared to work with the different elements of the SDA.</i></li> </ul> <p>As ITE courses are reviewed and revised GME courses and modules should likewise be assessed and actions taken, to ensure that delivery supports the SDA in the GME sector.</p>
Recommendation 25: Encourage colleges, employers and universities to use the wider evidence base provided by the SDA as the basis of decisions they take when	<p>We welcome this commitment and recommend that bilingual advantages be highlighted (e.g. problem-solving etc.). We recommend that there should be linkage to international research on the additive value of bilingual and</p>

selecting students or employees.	immersion education.
Recommendation 26: Require national monitoring and accountability systems to gather information on the breadth of achievements recognised within the SDA. Insight and the National Improvement Framework should be updated to reflect success as envisaged in the SDA.	We welcome this proposal and recommend that careful consideration be given to how it would apply to the GME sector.

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## **Fit for the Future: developing a post-school learning system to fuel economic transformation Skills Delivery Landscape Review**

This response paper from Bòrd na Gàidhlig provides input on how people of all ages across Scotland's Gaelic Communities might be included in that vision. Bòrd na Gàidhlig will be very happy to engage further on any of the issues noted in our response.

The response provided is organised in four sections, as follows:

1. Comments and recommendations relating to the preparation for the review.
2. National contexts for the review.
3. Specific additional comments for Chapters 1-3
4. The recommendations and responses from Bòrd na Gàidhlig

Overall, we welcome the developments proposed in Fit for the Future and we note the visionary statement in the conclusion which speaks of creating a system which

*“gives learners of all ages what they need to define and achieve their own success in the careers path that is right for them”*

### **1. Preparation for the Review.**

The Consultation Paper contained no references to the different contexts relating to Gaelic-medium Education (GME) or Gaelic-speakers and it was unclear if there had been any input planned in the delivery of the Engagement Sessions.

We recommend that there is some further reflection on how best partnership working between Bòrd na Gàidhlig and the Education Reform team can be improved so that information and expertise can be shared across the teams.

Ensuring that support materials are fully contextualised will support the provision of wider information within analysis reports.

We welcome the inclusion of comments relating to Gaelic and GME in the Analysis Report noting the following:

- Gaelic-speaking communities and skills provision (p9)
- Specific reference to GME and the Gaelic-language labour market (p67)
- Bilingual skills (p68)
- Coherence in the approach to CIAG in all GME (p84)

However, it was unclear how the comments impacted on either the final report or any of the key messages in the Analysis Report itself. Bòrd na Gàidhlig would be happy to provide professional advice and support for in this area.

### **2. National Contexts for the Review**

Linked to the comments in Preparation for the Review it may be helpful to summarise the context for Gaelic, GME and Fit for the Future. The following will be important elements to consider:

- The National Gaelic Language Plan approved by Scottish Ministers outlines the national strategic approach to develop Gaelic in all areas of Scottish life. It therefore is an important context for Fit for the Future.

- The Scottish Government is delivering its own Gaelic Language Plan which impacts on work across all Scottish Government teams and provides a specific context for all strategic development being undertaken on behalf of the Scottish Government.
- Skills Development Scotland, the Scottish Funding Council SQA are all currently delivering their own Gaelic Language Plans (GLP) as agreed by Bòrd na Gàidhlig:

#### *Skills Development Scotland GLP*

The plan includes reference to Gaelic as an economic and cultural asset worth £82 - £149 million. A range of actions are being delivered relating to the needs of young people in GME, the Gaelic Tourism Strategy, Apprenticeships, Careers Information and Advice Guidance and promotion of the language in the organisation's corporate work.

#### *Scottish Funding Council GLP*

The plan notes the agency's commitment to ensuring Gaelic "commands equal respect to English as an official language of Scotland (Gaelic Language Act 2005)". A range of actions relating to the core funding of colleges and universities and agreeing outcome agreements which impact on Gaelic are being delivered in addition to the corporate work the agency is engaged in to promote Gaelic.

#### *SQA GLP*

The plan outlines the SQA's work in aligning SQA awards and Foundation and Modern Apprenticeships in relation to Gaelic and GME, developing GME related case studies and promoting nationally and locally GME qualifications.

The framework for Gaelic Language Planning at national and organisational level are crucial contexts for the Reform agenda and we recommend that further reflection takes place so that the contexts are fully understood and impact on all development planning. Amongst the documents and strategies referenced for Fit for the Future is the Welsh Government's Summary of the Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Act which identifies "A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Welsh Language" as one of the five key principles underpinning the strategic vision. A similar vision could be incorporated into our Scottish thinking as we engage in reform across the education, skills, and training landscape.

### **Additional Strategic Development Contexts**

Along with the information in this section the following developments are of importance:

#### ***Faster Rate of Progress Work Stream: Economy and Labour Supply, co-led by Skills Development Scotland and Highlands and Islands Enterprise.***

The Deputy First Minister, John Swinney established the Faster Rate of Progress initiative in 2018 and Cabinet Secretaries with responsibility for Gaelic have continued to lead the initiative, which seeks to deliver faster progress on Gaelic development issues from national agencies. The initiative comprises of a number of work streams, one of which is on Economy and Labour. This work stream has an ambitious action plan in place which brings together actions from a range of agencies including Skills Development Scotland, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Creative

Scotland, Scottish Enterprise, Scottish Funding Council, Social Enterprise Academy, Scottish Qualifications Authority and Visit Scotland. The work plan focuses on issues such as the Gaelic Economy, the Gaelic Workforce of the Future and Gaelic Labour Market Recruitment and Retention.

***Short Life Working Group on Economic and Social Opportunities for Gaelic (Report to the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Economy)***

In March 2022 the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Economy convened a Short Life Working Group to focus on the economic and social opportunities connected to Gaelic. Members of the group included councillors and community leaders with expertise in Gaelic issues. The Group considered input from Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and the Welsh Government and relevant individuals and groups. The report to the Cabinet Secretary made 45 recommendations for immediate, medium term and long-term development across the following areas:

Population and Infrastructure  
Public Sector and Gaelic Language Plans  
Communities  
Education  
Key Sectors

The full report is available at

[www.gov.scot/publications/short-life-working-group-economic-social-opportunities-gaelic-report-cabinet-secretary-finance-economy](http://www.gov.scot/publications/short-life-working-group-economic-social-opportunities-gaelic-report-cabinet-secretary-finance-economy)

### **3. Fit for the Future Final Report Chapters 1-3**

#### *Chapter 1*

There are no references to Gaelic, GME or Gaelic-speaking communities in this chapter but we note reference to “*all Scotland’s people and places*” (1.19) and “*developing the diversity of workforce*” (1.27).

The responses contained in this paper will support further reflection on the context.

#### *Chapter 2 The Current Landscape: Themes*

In the 32 points raised in Chapter 2 there are no references to Gaelic, GME or Gaelic-speaking communities however again the proposals and comments in this response paper will help address this issue.

#### *Chapter 3: Priorities for the Future Landscape*

There are no references to Gaelic, GME or Gaelic-speaking communities in Chapter 3. We recognize the importance of a range of comments and proposals such as the following in 3.02:

- Establishing clearer remits
- Clear regional autonomy
- Streamlined, flexible public funding with outcomes and impact
- Coherent recognizable learning pathways
- Businesses that are active partners in workforce development

- Simple, well-posted engagement routes

It will be important that careful consideration takes place of how reform processes will deliver the aims of the National Plan for Gaelic, and the Gaelic Language Plans of the current agencies and the Scottish Government. This response paper and the response paper for Its Our Future will support further work. In addition, It's Our Future and Putting Learners at the Centre contain useful advice, comment and recommendations relating to Gaelic and GME.

#### 4. Recommendations and Responses from Bòrd na Gàidhlig

<p>1. The Scottish Government must take a clearer leadership role in post-school learning policy and stronger oversight of delivery and performance.</p>	<p>It will be important to ensure that from the outset there is a clear understanding of the aims of the National Gaelic Language Plan (NGLP) and that these aims are embedded in strategic planning. The report notes that there should be work to</p> <p><i>“set out clearly the remits and expectations”.</i></p> <p>Remits and expectations should include responsibilities towards the NGLP and the needs of GME and Gaelic-speaking communities across Scotland. We agree with the comment below and recommend further recognition of Gaelic and GME:</p> <p><i>“different learning approaches, using different contexts” (4.09)</i></p>
<p>2. Through its Purpose and Principles, the Scottish Government should establish a single, coherent narrative for what a successful post-school learning system looks like and how progress towards it will be measured.</p>	<p>It will be important that Gaelic and GME are included as part of the coherent narrative for the post-school learning system. We note the following comment</p> <p><i>“inadvertently drive behaviours which run contrary to the need for parity of esteem”</i></p> <p>It will be important to ensure that Gaelic and GME are included when reflecting on parity of esteem issues and that omission does not result in unintended negative impact on the language. We note the following and recommend inclusion of Gaelic and GME in this context:</p> <p><i>“equal value to the various settings and pathways” (4.10)</i></p>



<p>3. The Scottish Government should be responsible for national skills planning.</p>	<p>It will be important to build on the work of SDS, SFC and the SQA to ensure that market intelligence and data reflect the needs of Gaelic and the GME system. It will be important to include the language within agreed national priorities for workforce and skills development.</p>
<p>4. The Scottish Government should establish a clear template for regional skills planning.</p>	<p>When establishing the template, Gaelic related issues should be fully integrated and roles and expectations clear (relating to, for example, Gaelic skills, the Gaelic Labour Market and GME provision). We note the references to Regional Economic Partnerships (7 of the 8 partnerships are in areas providing GME at various levels). In addition, the following comment can provide a context for national and local delivery of strategic aims for Gaelic (as outlined in the NGLP, Organisational GLPS and the Scottish Government GLP etc.)</p> <p><i>“national priorities within which to consider local/regional goals” (4.27)</i></p>
<p>5. Scottish Ministers should identify and establish a single national funding body.</p>	<p>We welcome the commitment to</p> <p><i>“embedding commitments to equalities, widening access and fair work within the delivery system”</i></p> <p>Strategic thinking to ensure equality should include Gaelic-speaking communities both rural and urban. The national funding body should include the responsibility to promote the aims of the NGLP from its inception.</p>
<p>6. 7. The Scottish Government should redesign the process for how funding for all learning and training provision, including apprenticeships is allocated.</p>	<p>The redesign process should be planned and delivered so that the needs of the Gaelic-language labour market are met and Scotland fully capitalizes on the additional skills young people gain in GME. All funding strategies should be monitored to ensure they impact on the aims of the NGLP and when identifying the following</p> <p><i>“national skills priorities and needs”</i></p> <p>Gaelic related issues should be addressed.</p>
<p>8. Scottish Ministers should ensure that the new qualifications body... has a</p>	<p>We welcome the commitment to “meet the needs of all system users”. The new</p>

<p>clear remit for national oversight of the post-school qualifications landscape.</p>	<p>qualifications agency should, from the outset, have Gaelic and GME development embedded in its aims. Progress should be monitored closely to measure the impact on the aims of the NGLP.</p>
<p>9. The Scottish Government should carry out a comprehensive audit of post-school qualifications and pathways.</p>	<p>We note the proposal that skills frameworks are condensed into “single national framework”. The needs of the Gaelic sector should be fully considered when devising the audit and any recommendations as a result of auditing should deliver for Gaelic and GME as well as the English-medium system.</p>
<p>10. The Scottish Government, with relevant partners, should scope and commission the design of a digital training record.</p>	<p>As we have recommended in our response to Its Our Future the digital training record should be fully available in Gaelic and record the achievements gained through the medium of Gaelic.</p>
<p>11. SDS should be substantively reformed and recast as the national body for careers education and promotion.</p>	<p>New Careers Education and Promotion structures should be fully attuned to the needs of the Gaelic-language sector. We note the comment regarding the Careers Services Collaborative and its role</p> <p><i>“to improve the quality of careers advice and provision in Scotland”.</i></p> <p>All strategic planning in this regard should take the needs of GME and the Gaelic-language labour market into consideration.</p>
<p>12. A network of regional employer boards and a national employers forum should be established.</p>	<p>As with other recommendations we have made, the needs of the Gaelic sector should be structured into the new frameworks.</p>
<p>13. 14 Responsibility for supporting businesses with skills and workforce planning should clearly sit with the three enterprise agencies</p>	<p>We welcome the identification of the following issue</p> <p><i>“ businesses with identified workforce needs that are not readily being met through existing services”</i></p> <p>Reflection should take place on Gaelic labour market needs and the opportunities to develop it further. The three enterprise agencies should gather information on their impact on the aims of the NGLP and report on their successes regularly.</p>
<p>15. The Scottish Government must clearly map, communicate and promote entry points for different system users.</p>	<p>Mapping entry points and the communication and promotion strategy resulting from this action should include</p>

	<p>examples relating to GME and the Gaelic sector.</p> <p>Malcolm's Journey – a GME learning journey, provided as an exemplar in Its Our Future, is an excellent example of how Gaelic learning can be included as part of an overview of options.</p>
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