

SQA's provision for Gaelic



Keeping Gaelic at the Heart of Scotland's Future



Gaelic is recognised as an official language in Scotland, and was once the main language across Scotland. Its influence can still be seen far and wide in place names, mountain names and even on official buildings, while there are bilingual road and rail signs across the country.

But the real influence of Gaelic is on the future of Scotland, as an integral part of our heritage, national identity and cultural life.

SQA is committed to the objectives set out in the National Plan for Gaelic and the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 which recognises Gaelic as an official language of Scotland, commanding equal respect to English.

We provide a range of Gaelic qualifications suitable for everyone from learners to fluent speakers. They focus not only on language skills, but also incorporate musical, cultural, historical and vocational elements.

Gaelic (Learners) qualifications

Part of SQA's Modern Languages portfolio, these qualifications are designed for those new to the language, or who have little knowledge of Gaelic. They develop reading, listening, talking and writing skills to promote an understanding and use of Gaelic, and how Gaelic relates to English in terms of society, learning, employability and culture.

Gàidhlig qualifications

Language skills developed in Gaelic medium primary education, and at home, can be further developed and strengthened by these fluent speaker qualifications. These qualifications enable fluent Gaelic speakers to read, write, listen and talk in Gaelic for different purposes, audiences and contexts. They also develop understanding of the complexities of language through the study of texts and promote analytical thinking and awareness of the impact of the Gaelic language.

Qualifications in the medium of Gaelic

Gaelic medium qualifications enable fluent speakers to maintain their exposure to the language throughout secondary education. Subjects that can be studied include Cruinn-eòlas (Geography), Eachdraidh (History), Matamataig (Mathematics), Matamataig Fad-bheatha (Lifeskills Mathematics) and Nuadh-eòlas (Modern Studies).

SQA works closely with key partners to ensure that Gaelic medium candidates are supported at every stage in their educational development and achievement.

Find out more about SQA's qualifications in Gaelic at www.sqa.org.uk/gaelic

National Certificate in Celtic studies

National Certificate (NC) in Celtic Studies provides learners with an understanding of current developments in the creative, cultural and heritage industries, Gaelic language, the politics of the Celtic nations and traditional music and dance – with the possibility of progression to more advanced study in these areas. Learners can achieve additional Group Awards that are embedded within the NC. Where centres choose the relevant Units as options, candidates can gain a Skills for Work Course, an Award, or a National Progression Award.

Gaelic Units

National Units

These Units were developed by SQA in partnership with Colleges Scotland and cover the four key skills required to learn a new language successfully – speaking, listening, reading and writing. They can be built into National Courses, National Progression Awards (NPAs) and National Certificates.

Gaelic (Learners) for Work Purposes

These free-standing Units are suitable for a wide range of vocational settings, encouraging learners to reflect on the skills required for employability. They may also be used in conjunction with another Unit or group of Units to access a range of subject areas.

Higher National Units

Units are the building blocks of Higher National Certificates (HNCs) and Higher National Diplomas (HNDs) and are qualifications in their own right. There are Units that develop Gaelic language skills within a work-related context, while others develop listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

NPA in Contemporary Gaelic Songwriting and Production .

This National Progression Award develops a broad understanding of the Gaelic world and the relevance of Gaelic in contemporary contexts. It promotes the appreciation and use of Gaelic language and culture by harnessing musical skills and talents in the writing, arranging and performing of self-composed Gaelic songs. Learners are introduced to the roots of Gaelic music making before focusing on the transition to contemporary Gaelic music and the application of Gaelic to current genres. They also have the opportunity to become familiar with the latest sound recording technology.



“Our qualifications and services must be dynamic and relevant to the needs of business, industry and individuals. We need to ensure everyone in Scotland has the opportunity to reach their full potential. SQA has a major role to play in partnership with the Scottish Government and other stakeholder organisations in driving forward and delivering our ambitions for Gaelic.”

Dr Janet Brown

Contact us now

Partnership with SQA

SQA supplies products and services to all sectors of the UK, working closely with colleges, employers and training providers.

Every business or organisation which engages with SQA has a dedicated account manager as a main point of contact. We help you to identify and source suitable qualifications for your people so they can gain the skills and qualifications which suit your business needs. We can even help you create your own bespoke qualifications.

All our External Verifiers are subject specialists, so we guarantee the highest standards of quality assurance.

Contact our Business Development team for more information and advice on qualifications in this sector, and working with SQA.

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