

COMANN NAN OILEANACH NA GÀIDHEALTACHD AGUS NAN EILEAN
HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

PLANA CÀNAIN HISA | GAELIC LANGUAGE PLAN

Ro-ràdh | Introduction

1. This paper presents a draft of a Gaelic Language Plan for the Highlands and Islands Students' Association (HISA). The production of a Gaelic Language Plan is part of HISA's commitment to the Gaelic language. The need for the Highlands and Islands Students' Association (HISA) to have a Gaelic language plan has been identified to ensure that HISA includes Gaelic in its activities and communications.

Leasachadh | Development

2. The paper proposes areas of work for the HISA Gaelic Language Plan and a number of short-term and long-term actions to deliver this plan. The HISA Gaelic Language Plan has been developed by drawing on the influence of the UHI Gaelic Plan and with support of Gaelic experts in UHI. Its development also draws on previous surveys of Gaelic speakers who told HISA that:
 - a. Gaelic-speakers overwhelmingly reported they have not been engaging with HISA to date
 - b. Gaelic-speakers regularly choose to engage in UHI communications in Gaelic where there is a choice alongside English
 - c. The main barriers to using Gaelic were not knowing where, or with whom, they could use the language, and how to access Gaelic learning resources.
 - d. Over a two year period, engage in Gaelic-medium events and activities to provide an environment where Gaelic-use is accommodated and there is opportunity to integrate with Gaelic communities.
3. The intention for the HISA Gaelic Language Plan is to produce a high-level plan that can be taken forward into the 2024-26 academic years for a fixed long-term interval. This paper proposes a 2-year plan because further development beyond what is set out here over the 2 year period will only be possible with funding for a fluent speaker of Gaelic with skills to work with HISA to deliver additional activities.

Earrannan obair | Areas of work

4. The following areas of work will feature in the Gaelic Language Plan:
 - a. Communications
 - b. Social and learning opportunities/Gaelic communities
 - c. Democracy and representation
 - d. Staff and workplace
 - e. Working with UHI to engage with the wider policy developments in Gaelic in the region

Builleachadh | Implementation

5. As part of the consultation process behind the development of the Gaelic Language Plan, the CEO of HISA liaised closely with experts in UHI and via them Bòrd na Gàidhlig to seek advice. Gaelic Language Plans are required to be developed by statutory organisations under the auspices of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005. HISA is not a statutory organisation and is not obliged to develop and implement Gaelic Language Plans. Non-statutory organisations that do develop Gaelic Language Plans are considered to have 'voluntary plans' and are supported

by Bòrd na Gàidhlig. It is to be considered best practice for HISA to develop and implement its own Gaelic Language Plan.

6. Bòrd na Gàidhlig are supportive of this draft Gaelic Language Plan. Advice taken from Bòrd na Gàidhlig is that HISA should have a Gaelic Language Plan Implementation Group to oversee progress of the Gaelic Language Plan. This is recommended practice for statutory organisations, including the University of the Highlands and Islands where the project board chair is also chair of UHI's Gaelic Language Plan Implementation Group.

Eadar-theangachadh | Translation

7. It is recommended that upon adoption, the policy is translated by a professional Gaelic translator. This should be made available to Gaelic-speaking students in accessible channels including the HISA website.

Rachel (Raonaid) Burn, CEO HISA, April 2024, updated March 2025

PLANA CÀNAIN HISA | HISA GAELIC LANGUAGE PLAN

1. Communications

Area of development		Activity	HISA staff lead and progress
1.1 Bilingual communications	1.1.1	Strategic use of Gaelic in HISA comms HISA does not currently have a fluent Gaelic speaker on its staff. But with the support of UHI Gaelic speaking staff, HISA would aim to complete some of these actions below and all of them should funding become available to employ a fluent Gaelic speaker. Subject to funding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each month, ensure that at least one key social media post on Twitter, TikTok and Instagram is on Gaelic – possibly relating to key HISA activity in that month such as LGBTQ+ History month • Social media posting on 'Gaelic word of the month' • Ensure elections and Welcome Week information is available in Gaelic subject to a fluent speaker being available to HISA • Posts related to Gaelic language or culture should be released bilingually, with Gaelic written at the top for priority • Involvement in Seachdain na Gàidhlig 	HISA Comms team Regular inclusion of a Gaelic word of the month in HISA's monthly student newsletter: Newsletter HISA celebrated Gaelic week in February 2025 in partnership with UHI. Ongoing funding applications are underway to allow HISA to do more in this space as further activity would require a fluent Gaelic speaker.
	1.1.2	HISA newsletter	

		From September 2024, each HISA newsletter which goes to all UHI students each month will contain an article in Gaelic	HISA Comms team Regular inclusion of a Gaelic word of the month in HISA's monthly student newsletter: Newsletter and sharing of links to Gaelic resources
	1.1.3	HISA Gàidhlig on HISA website A HISA Gàidhlig presence on the HISA website. This space will include Gaelic content written and submitted by students.	HISA Comms Team With support from UHI's Gaelic Officer, HISA's Gaelic webpage was rewritten and republished in 2024.

2. Social opportunities/Gaelic communities

Area of development		Activity	HISA staff lead
2.1 Social opportunities/Gaelic communities	2.1.1	Clubs and societies	HISA's Director of Communities and Communications HISA staff have contacted students and staff regarding setting up a Gaelic society but no student interest at this stage. Ongoing funding applications are underway to allow HISA to do more in this space as further activity would require a fluent Gaelic speaker.
		HISA will encourage and support students in setting up a Gaelic society/club to connect students across UHI who wish to converse in Gaelic, run events and activities in Gaelic and promote Gaelic across our communities. Longer-term, HISA will encourage all its clubs and societies to put out promotional material in Gaelic where relevant (alongside other key messaging around equality, diversity and inclusion for example).	
	2.1.2	Gaelic presence in HISA event branding and promotion	HISA Comms Team Ongoing funding applications are underway to allow HISA to do more in this space as
		Where possible, HISA events and campaigns branding shall be bilingual	

			further activity would require a fluent Gaelic speaker.
	2.1.3	Liaison with UHI APs and organisations that work with Gaelic	
		Work together with APs and Sabhal Mòr Ostaig to promote the learning and use of Gaelic amongst UHI students.	CEO Ongoing relationship building with relevant partners and the promotion of Gaelic

3. Democracy and representation

Area of development		Activity	HISA staff lead
3.1 Elections	3.1.1	Elections and policies	Director of Student Engagement and Representation Ongoing funding applications are underway to allow HISA to do more in this space as further activity would require a fluent Gaelic speaker.
		Some elections material will be provided in Gaelic from the 2026 spring elections onwards. Longer-term if funding and skills allow, all elections material and come policies to be written and held in Gaelic. Aim to work with Comann nan oileanach more closely.	

	3.1.2	Gaelic at HISA officer induction Newly elected officers will receive basic Gaelic training as part of their inductions	CEO Basic Gaelic phrases will be included in elected officer induction programmes for the 25/26 officers
3.2 Elections and democratic events	3.2.3	Bilingual material for HISA elections Bilingual material will be produced for HISA elections. Election information and results will be provided bilingually on the HISA website and on social media, subject to funding. Officers will be encouraged to use Gaelic where this is possible when running for elections or in their jobs. They will be provided with resources such as templates in order to make this easier for them. There will be links to Gaelic resources on the UHI website.	CEO Ongoing funding applications are underway to allow HISA to do more in this space as further activity would require a fluent Gaelic speaker.
3.3 National debates	3.3.4	Contributing to Scotland wide debates HISA is keen to contribute to nation-wide conversations about the use of and development of Gaelic, perhaps via advocating for a Gaelic policy for NUS Scotland	HISA President Ongoing

4. Staff and workplace

Area of development		Activity	HISA staff lead
4.1 Visibility and use	4.1.1	Bilingual signage in HISA offices	CEO HISA is currently undertaking a brand refresh and is in discussions with local APs about office locations, signage and related costs
		Gaelic signs will be placed around HISA's staff building and offices	
	4.1.2	Gaelic in recruitment and induction	CEO Complete – Gaelic or a commitment to learn Gaelic now a desirable in all HISA
		Gaelic to be a desirable skill where relevant as standard for all HISA recruitment, but should also not be seen as a barrier to successful recruitment. A commitment to learn to be considered for terms and conditions via the UHI funded scheme. And a few basic words will be included in staff induction.	
	4.1.3	Gaelic awareness and toolkits	CEO Workshops being developed.
		Gaelic awareness sessions will be offered to all officers and staff at all staff meetings and staff will be made aware of toolkits and websites to help with Gaelic phrases.	
	4.1.4	Gaelic in email signatures and in out of office messages	CEO CEO working with UHI's Gaelic Officer to implement for summer 2025 leave periods.
		Staff will be provided with Gaelic wording templates to use on emails and in out of office messages. Use of HISA website to promote a 'think bilingual'.	

	4.1.4	Engaging students in Gaelic	CEO No items received in Gaelic
		Students who write to HISA in Gaelic will be receive a response in Gaelic wherever possible. This will require the support of UHI staff and so may not be possible on every occasion.	
4.2 Funding and training	4.2.1	Commitment to apply for funding to extend HISA's Gaelic plan	
		Work with Bòrd na Gàidhlig to obtain funding for a fluent speaker to take forward more initiatives for HISA	CEO Ongoing funding applications
	4.2.1	Commitment to promote Gaelic courses to staff and allow time off for their study	
		Commitment to promote the beginners' courses run by SMO and related UHI funding, or DuoLingo and allow staff time off during the working day to undertake study if needed within the limits of operational requirements. Time off will be considered on a case by case basis.	CEO Gaelic courses promoted when funding is available. Staff encouraged to attend alongside flexible working to allow attendance.