

**Rannsachadh air Poileasaidh Cànan  
agus Dealbhadh Cànan**

**Research on Language Policy and Planning**

**THE STATE OF THE 'GAELIC ECONOMY':  
A RESEARCH REPORT**

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**Roinn na Ceiltis agus Eòlas na h-Alba, Oilthigh Dhùn Èideann**  
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Tha e ceadachd an aithisg seo a chleachdadh ann an dòigh sam bith nach eil a chum prothaid, agus tha e ceadachd lethbhric a chur saor 's an asgaidh gu daoine eile, cho fad agus gu bheilear a' cur an cèill cò às a thàinig i, nach tèid atharrachadh a dhèanamh oirre, agus gum fuirich an sanas seo an ceangal rithe. Chan fhaod i a bhith air a sgaoileadh ann an riochd eadar-dhealaichte sam bith no air a cur a-steach ann an bathar no làrach-lìn sam bith a tha a chum prothaid gun chead sgrìobhte. Is e a th'anns an aithisg seo ach beachdan an ùghdair a-mhàin, agus cha bu chòir an tuigsinn mar bheachdan Roinn Ceiltis agus Eòlas na h-Alba no mar bheachdan Oilthigh Dhùn Èideann.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study builds on earlier research on the emerging 'Gaelic economy' in Scotland, assessing the range of jobs in Scotland designated as 'Gaelic essential' or 'Gaelic desirable' that were advertised in three key newspapers during the period 1 January 2000 to 30 June 2001. This report also looks more generally at the position of Gaelic within the overall regional economy of Skye and the Western Isles, seeking to determine the extent to which a bilingual economy exists in Scotland's most strongly Gaelic-speaking areas.

The report concludes that Gaelic remains excluded from the mainstream and has made only limited inroads into the strategic thinking of employers. Only a small proportion of jobs are designated as Gaelic-essential or Gaelic-desirable, and almost all of these are within publicly funded organisations of one kind or another; Gaelic has almost no role at all in the for-profit commercial sector. This pattern of inattention and neglect is seriously damaging to the language's prospects, and merits close attention from government and Gaelic agencies.

The following are the key findings of the report:

- **'Gaelic essential' posts:** a total of 105.4 posts advertised during the period in question were designated as 'Gaelic essential'. 26.6% of these were in the Western Isles; 34.4% in the Highland Council area (including 11.5% in Skye); 39.0% in other parts of Scotland (including 11.9% in Glasgow); and 0.9% outwith Scotland.

Only 4 (at most) of these 105.4 posts were not dependent, directly or indirectly, on public funding. 62.6% were in the Education sector; 19% in Media/Publishing; 9.9% in Arts and Culture; and the remainder in Community/Economic Development, Gaelic Development, Government, Tourism, and Miscellaneous.

- **'Gaelic desirable' posts:** a total of 60.5 posts advertised during the period in question were designated as 'Gaelic desirable'. These were much more concentrated in the Western Isles and Skye than the 'Gaelic essential' jobs: 56.2% were located in the Western Isles; 23.1% in Skye; 10.8% in the remainder of the Highland Council area; and 9.0% elsewhere in Scotland.

Only 9 (at most) of these 60.5 posts were not dependent, directly or indirectly, on public funding. 24.8% were in the Community/Economic Development sector; 14.0% in Arts and Culture; 13.2% in Tourism; 9% in the Environmental sector; 8.3% in Health and Social Services; and the remainder in Education, Gaelic Development, Government, Media, Transport, and Miscellaneous.

- **The language of advertising:** 46.5% of advertisements for 'Gaelic essential' posts were in Gaelic only; 16.4% were bilingual; and 37.0% were in English only. 16.5% of advertisements for 'Gaelic desirable' posts were in Gaelic only; 1.7% were bilingual; and 81.8% were in English only.
- **Gaelic in the education sector:** a total of 74.5 education sector posts advertised during the period under study were designated as 'Gaelic essential' or 'Gaelic desirable'. Of these 38.5 were primary, secondary, or tertiary teaching posts and 36 were pre-school or

educational support posts. 66.0 posts were designated ‘Gaelic-essential’ and 8.5 ‘Gaelic-desirable’.

Compared to non-education posts, the geographical distribution was spread out more widely throughout Scotland. 12.8% were in the Western Isles; 46.3% in the Highland Council area (14.1% in Skye); 9.4% in Argyll and Bute; 8.7% in North Lanarkshire; 8.1% in Glasgow; and the rest elsewhere in Scotland.

- **Gaelic in the local authorities:** very few posts in the Western Isles and Skye were designated as ‘Gaelic essential’ or ‘Gaelic desirable’ by the local authorities for these areas, Highland Council and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, despite these authorities’ formal Gaelic policies. Comhairle nan Eilean Siar advertised some 257.5 posts, but only 4.9% were specified as ‘Gaelic essential’ (2.5%) or ‘Gaelic desirable’ (2.3%). The Highland Council advertised some 87.5 posts in Skye, but only 13.1% of these were designated as either ‘Gaelic essential’ (12.0%) or ‘Gaelic desirable’ (1.1%).
- **Gaelic in the community and economic development sector:** 49.0 posts were advertised in the community and economic development sector in Skye and the Western Isles. None of these were designated as ‘Gaelic essential’, but 30.6% were designated as ‘Gaelic desirable’. The commitment of the local enterprise companies was at best ambiguous; notably, Skye and Lochalsh Enterprise did not designate any of its advertised posts as ‘Gaelic essential’ or ‘Gaelic desirable’.
- **Gaelic in health and social services:** Gaelic remains almost completely excluded from the health, social services and voluntary sectors in Skye and the Western Isles. For example, Highland Primary Care NHS Trust did not designate any of its 15 advertised positions in Skye as ‘Gaelic essential’ or ‘Gaelic desirable’, while the Western Isles Health Board advertised 61 posts, of which none were designated ‘Gaelic essential’ and only one (1.6%) was designated ‘Gaelic desirable’. This lack of attention to the Gaelic dimension is particularly important given the heavy concentration of Gaelic speakers in the older age groups of the local population, who make disproportionate use of health and other social services.
- **The commercial sector:** a total of 88.2 advertised posts were designated as ‘Gaelic essential’ or ‘Gaelic desirable’ in the Western Isles (62.1) and Skye (26.1) during the time period under study. This number forms a very small fraction of the overall number advertised, some 1,800. Gaelic evidently remains at the margins of the regional economy and, crucially, is almost completely excluded from the core: the private, for-profit commercial sector.

The report concludes that these findings present a serious challenge to those involved in Gaelic development. The creation of a niche ‘Gaelic economy’ has been a significant achievement, but there has been disturbingly little progress towards the more fundamental goals of normalising Gaelic as a language of public and consumer services and of building a bilingual regional economy in the Gaelic-speaking areas of Scotland. The near-total reliance on public subsidy, and the near-total exclusion of Gaelic from the private commercial sector, are grounds for profound concern.

If meaningful progress is to be achieved, all providers of public, social and consumer services in the Gaelic-speaking areas should carefully evaluate their response to the challenge of operating in a bilingual environment. If Gaelic is to flourish, and a genuinely bilingual environment is to be fostered, proactive action is needed from all parties, and the unreflective, default practices of a monolingual Anglophone environment must be superseded.

# INTRODUCTION

## 1. Background to the study

This study builds on work conducted in the early 1990s to investigate the scope of the emerging ‘Gaelic economy’ in Scotland (Galloway 1994, 1995; Sproull & Ashcroft 1993, Sproull 1996). The development of this Gaelic economy is of considerable importance, for it helps challenge the long-standing perception that Gaelic has no practical economic value and that advancement in the world through secure employment requires the adoption and use of English — a perception that has been a prime factor in the language shift from Gaelic to English over recent centuries (McLeod, forthcoming).

Specifically, this report assesses the range of jobs in Scotland designated as being either ‘Gaelic essential’ or ‘Gaelic desirable’ during the period 1 January 2000 to 30 June 2001: the different sorts of posts in question, the economic sectors involved, and the location of the employers. As such, the focus is on jobs in which Gaelic is to be used as a working language, and not on whether the work itself is directly related to Gaelic language and culture. This emphasis is important, for the latter approach, which fails to give appropriate attention to the question of Gaelic as an actual working language, has been chosen by some previous researchers in the field (Sproull & Ashcroft 1993, Sproull 1996).

As well as updating earlier research, this report looks more generally at the position of Gaelic within the overall regional economy of Skye and the Western Isles. These are now the only areas in Scotland where Gaelic speakers are present in sufficient concentration — in absolute numbers and as a proportion of the overall population — to make viable the use of Gaelic as a language in mainstream workplaces and the delivery of Gaelic-medium services to citizens and consumers.<sup>1</sup> Gaelic may be used in specific workplaces — entities or organisations having a direct relationship to Gaelic — in lower-density environments, in west central Scotland for example, but it is not realistic to view Gaelic as a potential working language in a regional economy where 99% of the population does not speak the language.

Even in Scotland’s most strongly Gaelic areas, it is apparent that although a niche ‘Gaelic sector’ has developed, Gaelic remains excluded from the mainstream and has made only limited inroads into the strategic thinking of employers in the public, voluntary, and commercial sectors. Little genuine progress has been made in this connection since the early 1980s, when it was reported that ‘no public agency other than Comhairle nan Eilean [Western Isles Council] has progressed to the stage of offering formal communication facilities with the Gael in his own tongue, or developed a role for internal administration [using] the language’ (Mackay 1984: 53). Very few jobs are designated as Gaelic-essential or Gaelic-desirable in these key sectors, even when the primary customer or patient group consists of infirm or vulnerable first-language Gaelic speakers. This pattern of inattention and neglect is seriously damaging to the language’s prospects, and merits close attention from government and Gaelic agencies.

## 2. Methodology

The methodology used for this report is somewhat unusual. The study is based on the advertising of jobs in the local press rather than on surveys of employers. Specifically, the study considers posts advertised in the *Oban Times*, the *Stornoway Gazette* and the *West Highland Free Press* for the period 1 January 2000 to 30 June 2001:

- tabulating the posts designated as ‘Gaelic essential’
- tabulating the posts designated as ‘Gaelic desirable’, and
- assessing key posts that were *not* designated as either ‘Gaelic essential’ or ‘Gaelic desirable’.

The *Free Press* and the *Gazette* serve as the primary local newspapers for Skye and the Western Isles (together with areas of the northwest mainland from Moidart to Wester Ross), and this report is based on the assumption that job advertising in these papers gives a reliable picture of the overall job market in Skye and the Western Isles during the period studied. The *Oban Times* serves a residually Gaelic area but attracts a wide range of advertising given its high profile in the Highlands.

In addition, these newspapers, the *West Highland Free Press* in particular, are recognised as appropriate if not essential outlets for the advertising of Gaelic-related jobs outside the primary areas they serve. As such, it is widely recognised that almost all Gaelic-related jobs in Scotland are advertised in one or more of these newspapers.<sup>2</sup> Studying the job advertising in these papers therefore allows a reliable assessment of the overall state of the ‘Gaelic job market’ at a national level.

However, focusing on formal job specifications and advertisements is both over-inclusive and under-inclusive.<sup>3</sup>

- First, the fact that a job is designated as ‘Gaelic desirable’ (or perhaps even ‘Gaelic essential’) does not necessarily mean that the job was eventually filled by a Gaelic speaker. The relative importance that a particular employer attaches to Gaelic with regard to a particular job is unknown, as is the availability of suitable Gaelic-speaking candidates.
- Second, the fact that a job is designated as ‘Gaelic desirable’ does not show the degree to which Gaelic will actually be used as a working language by the employee in question; in some cases, the designation of posts as ‘Gaelic desirable’ seems to be largely aspirational or symbolic rather than practical.
- Third, particularly in areas where Gaelic speakers form a substantial proportion of the local workforce, many jobs not designated as ‘Gaelic essential’ or ‘Gaelic desirable’ will in fact be filled by Gaelic speakers who will use Gaelic in their jobs to some degree.

The emphasis on formal designations, however, is valuable and appropriate, however, for they demonstrate that Gaelic is institutionalised to some extent within an organization and is incorporated into the organisation’s operational planning. Such awareness and institutionalisation is a prerequisite to language planning within an organisation, that is, strategic planning to incorporate Gaelic as an internal working language and a language used in delivering services to customers, consumers, or citizens. With organisations in which such awareness has not been demonstrated, such strategic planning is very unlikely to occur, and Gaelic will be used, if at all, on a casual and uncoordinated basis, and only for low-level functions (cf. Mac an Iomaire 1983). This is likely to be the case even in organisations, like the health and social services in Skye and the Western Isles, where a substantial proportion of the workforce are Gaelic speakers.

### 3. Structure

The study has five sections:

- Section 1 gives an overview of the various jobs designated as ‘Gaelic essential’ or ‘Gaelic desirable’;
- Section 2 looks in detail at the jobs designated as ‘Gaelic essential’: what kinds of posts are involved and where these posts are located;
- Section 3 looks in detail at the jobs designated as ‘Gaelic desirable’: what kinds of posts are involved and where these posts are located;
- Section 4 looks at the extent to which Gaelic is used in advertisements for ‘Gaelic essential’ and ‘Gaelic desirable’ posts;
- Section 5 considers in detail the ‘Gaelic essential’ and ‘Gaelic desirable’ posts in the education sector;
- Section 6 focuses on the limited use of Gaelic by the local governmental authorities in Skye and the Western Isles, notwithstanding their formal Gaelic policies;
- Section 7 focuses on the limited role for Gaelic in health and social service provision in Skye and the Western Isles;
- Section 8 focuses on the use of Gaelic by community and economic development organisations and projects in Skye and the Western Isles;
- Section 9 considers the position of Gaelic in the commercial sector and in postal and tourism services in Skye and the Western Isles;
- Section 10 considers a range of remaining issues, including the surprisingly limited use of Gaelic by certain organisations with a marked Gaelic ‘profile’.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>The 1991 census reported 19,546 Gaelic speakers in the Western Isles, 66.0% of the population, and 4,120 Gaelic speakers in Skye, 45.6% of the population. The Gaelic-speaking proportion was actually higher in the Isle of Tiree than in Skye (55.9%), but the very small absolute number of speakers (429), and the very small overall population of Tiree (768), mean that the local economy is tiny and undiversified. Similarly, although Glasgow had some 50% more Gaelic speakers than Skye (6,300), this figure represented less than 1% of the city’s population of 637,949.

<sup>2</sup>There are a few exceptions. For example, the author is aware that three Gaelic-related job vacancies during the period in question, at the Departments of Celtic in the Universities of Aberdeen (1) and Edinburgh (2), were not advertised in any of the newspapers surveyed. A further Scottish Gaelic teaching post at the National University of Ireland, Galway was not advertised anywhere in Scotland.

<sup>3</sup>Two additional caveats are necessary. First, in some cases it is not clear how many posts are to be filled. When an advertisement uses the plural form (‘classroom assistants’, ‘actors’ etc.) without specifying a particular number, it is assumed that there are two posts in question. This almost certainly results in an overall undercount. Second, some posts are advertised as being part-time but do not give the actual number of hours per week. All such posts are classified as 0.5 FTE. This assumption may well produce an overcount.



## Section I

### OVERVIEW: THE ‘GAELIC JOB MARKET’ TODAY

A total of **165.9** posts advertised during the period in question were designated as ‘Gaelic essential’ or ‘Gaelic desirable’. Of these **105.4** were designated as ‘Gaelic essential’ and **60.5** as ‘Gaelic desirable’. The breakdown of the two different classifications is discussed in detail below.

**37.4%** of the ‘Gaelic essential’ or ‘Gaelic desirable’ jobs were in the Western Isles and **33.9%** in the Highland Council area (with **15.7%** of these being in Skye). The rest were spread out throughout Scotland, with an important concentration (**8.1%**) in Glasgow.

#### Geographical distribution

##### Total:

	<u>‘Essential’</u>	<u>‘Desirable’</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>%</u>
Western Isles	28.1	34.0	62.1	37.4%
Highland	35.7 (Skye 12.1)	20.5 (Skye 14.0)	56.2 (Skye 26.1)	33.9% (15.7%)
Aberdeen City	1.0		1.0	0.6%
Angus		1.0	1.0	0.6%
Argyll & Bute	9.6		9.6	5.8%
East Ayrshire	1.5		1.5	0.9%
East Dunbartonshire	1.5		1.5	0.9%
East Renfrewshire		0.33	0.33	0.2%
Edinburgh City	3.5		3.5	2.1%
Glasgow City	12.5	1.0	13.5	8.1%
Inverclyde	1.0	3.33	4.33	2.6%
North Ayrshire	1.0		1.0	0.6%
North Lanarkshire	6.5		6.5	3.9%
Perth & Kinross	1.0		1.0	0.6%
Renfrewshire	1.5	0.33	1.83	1.1%
Overseas (Italy)	1.0		1.0	0.6%

## Section II

### ‘GAELIC ESSENTIAL’ POSTS

A total of **105.4** posts advertised during the period in question were designated as ‘Gaelic essential’.

This figure includes a number of posts for which the advertisement was published in Gaelic only but did not expressly state that Gaelic was an essential requirement for the post. Despite this ambiguity, this report classifies as ‘Gaelic essential’ any job advertised in Gaelic only.

Posts designated as ‘Gaelic essential’ were more widely distributed across Scotland than those designated ‘Gaelic desirable’. 26.6% were in the Western Isles and 34.4% in the Highland Council area (with only 11.5% of these being in Skye). Another 39% were spread out throughout Scotland, with 11.9% in Glasgow; exceptionally, one post (0.9% of the total) was located in Italy.

The most striking finding here is the total absence of ‘Gaelic essential’ posts in the private commercial sector. At most 4 of these 105.4 posts were not dependent (directly or indirectly) on public funding. This dependence on the public purse is clearly a fundamental weakness and demonstrates that the Gaelic economy remains a creature on the margins and that the regional economy in Skye and the Western Isles remains an ‘English only’ operation at its core.

#### Geographical distribution

##### Total: 105.4 posts

Western Isles	28.1	26.6%
Highland	35.7	34.4%
	(Skye 12.1)	(11.5%)
Aberdeen City	1.0	0.9%
Argyll & Bute	9.6	8.5%
East Ayrshire	1.5	1.4%
East Dunbartonshire	1.5	1.4%
Edinburgh City	3.5	3.3%
Glasgow City	12.5	11.9%
Inverclyde	1.0	0.9%
North Ayrshire	1.0	0.9%
North Lanarkshire	6.5	6.2%
Perth & Kinross	1.0	0.9%
Renfrewshire	1.5	1.4%
Overseas	1.0	0.9%

##### Sectoral distribution:

Arts, Culture, Tourism	10.4	9.9%
Community/Economic Development	1.0	0.9%
Education	66.0	62.6%
Gaelic Development	3.0	2.8%

Media/Publishing	20.0	19.0%
Government	2.0	1.9%
Tourism	1.0	0.9%
Miscellaneous	2.0	1.9%

**Non-educational sector: 39.4 posts**

Western Isles	19.6	49.7%
Highland	8.2	20.8%
	(Skye 2.6)	(6.6%)
Argyll & Bute	1.6	4.1%
Edinburgh City	1.5	3.8%
Glasgow City	6.5	16.5%
North Ayrshire	1.0	2.5%
Overseas (Italy)	1.0	2.5%

**Educational sector: 66.0 posts**

Western Isles	8.5	12.9%
Highland	27.5	41.7%
	(Skye 9.5)	(14.4%)
Aberdeen City	1.0	1.5%
Argyll & Bute	8.0	12.1%
East Ayrshire	1.5	2.3%
East Dunbartonshire	1.5	2.3%
Edinburgh City	2.0	3.0%
Glasgow City	6.0	9.1%
Inverclyde	1.0	1.5%
North Lanarkshire	6.5	9.8%
Perth & Kinross	1.0	1.5%
Renfrewshire	1.5	2.3%

The distribution of posts within the education sector is discussed in greater detail in Section 5 below.

The following were the non-education posts designated as ‘Gaelic essential’:

Acair (Publishers), Stornoway, Lewis:  
Administrator

BBC:

2 Actors, Glasgow

Assistant to Head of Gaelic Broadcasting, Glasgow

Political Reporter, Radio nan Gaidheal, Glasgow/Edinburgh

Presenter, ‘Dè a-nis?’ television programme, Glasgow

2 Producers, ‘Coinneach MacIomhair’ programme, Radio nan Gaidheal, Stornoway

Researcher, ‘Eòrpa’ television programme, Glasgow

Researcher, ‘Coinneach MacIomhair’ programme, Radio nan Gaidheal, Stornoway

Trainee reporter, Glasgow

Cànan (Graphic Design), Sleat, Skye:

Project Manager

Cli [formerly Comann an Luchd Ionnsachaidh], Inverness:  
Information Manager

Comataidh Craolaidh Gàidhlig, Stornoway, Lewis:  
Committee Member  
Development Officer  
Depute Chair

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar:  
Receptionist  
Gaelic Youth Worker

Companaidh Leasachaidh Ìle, Bowmore, Islay:  
Development Officer

Cuan Ard Press, Lewis:  
Media Development Officer

Fèisean nan Gaidheal:  
4 Feis Support Workers (0.6 FTE) (Highland 1.2 (Skye 0.6), Argyll & Bute 0.6, Western Isles 0.6)

Gaelic Community Radio Working Group, Inverness:  
Secretary

An Gàidheal Ùr (newspaper), Stornoway:  
Advertising/Marketing Officer

Gearrannan Blackhouse Village, Carloway, Lewis:  
Activity Demonstrator

Grampian Television, Lewis:  
Reporter

Hebridean Celtic Festival, Lewis:  
Co-ordinator

Kenyon Communications Ltd., Lewis:  
Journalist

Media nan Eilean, Broadford, Skye:  
Producer (Television)

Neil Mitchison, Italy:  
Au Pair

Pròiseact nan Ealan, Stornoway, Lewis:  
Storytelling Development Officer  
Website Development Officer

Royal National Mòd, Inverness:  
Clerical Assistant  
Development Officer

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig/Scottish Arts Council, Sleat, Skye:  
Writer in Residence

Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh:  
Gaelic Officer

Studio Alba, Stornoway, Lewis:  
Videotape Editing Assistant

Taigh Arainn, Brodick, Arran:  
Resource Centre Manager

Taigh Dhonnchaidh, Ness, Lewis:  
Gaelic Arts/Music Coordinator

## Section III

### ‘GAELIC DESIRABLE’ POSTS

A total of **60.5** posts advertised during the period in question were designated as ‘Gaelic desirable’.

The wording used in the advertisements for these posts varied considerably. Gaelic was variously characterised as an ‘advantage’, ‘a strong advantage’, ‘a distinct advantage’, ‘highly desirable’, ‘useful’, ‘very useful’ and ‘particularly welcome’. For the purposes of this report, these various verbal permutations were taken as being functionally identical. On the other hand, advertisements by NCH Action for Children that stated ‘we would welcome applications which reflect the language and culture of the Western Isles’ were regarded as excessively vague and the posts in question were not classified as ‘Gaelic desirable’.

In contrast to the ‘Gaelic essential’ posts, posts designated as ‘Gaelic desirable’ were strongly concentrated in Skye and the Western Isles. 56.2% were located in the Western Isles and 23.1% in Skye (with only a further 10.8% in the remainder of the Highland Council area). Only 9.9% were located outside the Western Isles and the Highland Council area. In general, these posts involved a wider range of activities than the ‘Gaelic essential’ posts; and it appears that only in Skye and the Western Isles is the concentration of Gaelic speakers sufficient to make Gaelic seem ‘relevant’ in a broad range of posts.

On the other hand, the absence of the private commercial sector is also striking with regard to ‘Gaelic desirable’ posts. At most 9 of the 60.5 posts were in the private commercial sector, defined at its broadest to include tourist facilities.

#### Geographical distribution:

##### Total: 60.5 posts

Western Isles	34.0	56.2%
Highland	20.5	33.9%
	(Skye 14)	(23.1%)
Angus	1.0	1.7%
East Renfrewshire	0.33	0.5%
Glasgow City	1.0	1.7%
Inverclyde <sup>1</sup>	3.33	5.5%
Renfrewshire	0.33	0.5%

#### Sectoral breakdown:

Arts and Culture	8.0	13.2%
Community/Economic Development	15.0	24.8%
Education	8.5	14.0%
Environment	6.0	9.9%
Gaelic Development	2.0	3.3%

Government	1.0	1.7%
Health and Social Services	5.0	8.3%
Media	2.0	3.3%
Tourism	8.0	13.2%
Transport	2.0	3.3%
Miscellaneous	3.0	5.0%

### **Non-education sector: 52 posts**

Western Isles	33.0	63.5%
Highland	15.0	28.9%
	(Skye 13)	(25.0%)
East Renfrewshire	0.33	0.6%
Glasgow City	1.0	1.9%
Inverclyde <sup>1</sup>	2.33	4.5%
Renfrewshire	0.33	0.6%

### **Education sector: 8.5 posts**

Western Isles	1.0	11.8%
Highland	5.5	64.7%
	(Skye 1.0)	(11.8%)
Angus	1.0	11.8%
Inverclyde	1.0	11.8%

The distribution of posts within the education sector is discussed in greater detail in Section 5 below.

The following were the non-education posts designated as ‘Gaelic desirable’:

Armadale Castle, Sleat, Skye:  
2 Visitor Personnel<sup>2</sup>

Caledonian MacBrayne, Gourock:  
2 Board Members

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar:  
Landfill Site Manager/Recycling Officer  
Manager, Barra Working for Communities Project  
2 Museum Warders  
2 Social Care Workers

Comunn na Gàidhlig, Glasgow:  
Project Director, Glasgow Gaelic Centre

Cothrom Ltd [Information Technology project], South Uist:  
Manager  
Project Manager  
Secretary  
Tutor

Crossroads Care, Skye & Lochalsh:  
Care Attendant

Crown Office/Procurator Fiscal, Lochmaddy, North Uist:  
Administrative Officer

Fearann Eilean Iarmain, Sleat, Skye:  
Executive

Fèis Rois, Ullapool:  
Education Development Officer

Forestry Commission, Strontian:  
Seasonal Community Ranger

Highland Council, South Skye/Lochalsh:  
Piping Tutor

Iomairt aig an Oir:  
Administrator, Drimshader, Harris  
Local Development Officer, Drimshader, Harris  
Local Development Officer, Uig and Bernera

Lèirsinn (Research Centre), Sleat, Skye:  
Projects Assistant

Lewis & Harris Cattle Producers Group:  
Co-ordinator, Cattle Health Initiative

Media nan Eilean, Broadford, Skye:  
Researcher

Lucilla Noble, Sleat, Skye:  
Housekeeper

Paic and Kinloch Development Group, Lewis:  
Development Officer

Pròiseact nan Ealan, Stornoway:  
Project Manager

Pròiseact Uibhist 2000, Benbecula:  
Project Officer, Language and Culture

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds:  
Uist Warden

Scottish National Heritage:  
Area Officer, Fort William  
Area Officer, Portree

Skye & Lochalsh Council for Voluntary Organizations:  
Centre Manager/Outreach Worker

Skye & Lochalsh Mental Health Association:  
Outreach Worker



Skye & Lochalsh Traditional Music Project:  
Traditional Music Coordinator

Southern Isles Amenity Trust:  
Countryside Ranger, Barra

Taigh Chearsabhaigh, Lochmaddy, North Uist:  
Arts Education Officer

Tighean Innse Gall, Lewis:  
Trainee Installer

Urras nan Gearrannan, Carloway, Lewis:  
Catering Assistants  
Catering Supervisor  
Retail Assistant  
Village Manager

Voluntary Action Lewis:  
Project Manager

West Highland Free Press, Broadford, Skye:  
Journalist

Western Isles Enterprise:  
Development Officer, Stornoway  
Development Officer, Benbecula  
IT Communications Officer

Western Isles Health Board:  
Administrative Assistant, Uist & Barra Hospital

Western Isles Tourist Board:  
Tourism Niche Marketing Manager

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Note that this figure includes two Board Member posts for Caledonian MacBrayne, which is based in Gourock. The classification of these posts as being located in Inverclyde is admittedly somewhat arbitrary.

<sup>2</sup>These posts were advertised in the *West Highland Free Press* on 11.2.00, where it was stated that Gaelic 'would be useful'. However, a similar advertisement the following year (19.1.01) made no reference to Gaelic. This discrepancy may suggest that this employer did not actually place significant emphasis on Gaelic in its hiring decisions and operational functions.

## Section IV

### THE LANGUAGE OF ADVERTISING

As Scotland's Gaelic economy has grown and the advertising of 'Gaelic essential' and 'Gaelic desirable' posts has become increasingly common, so too has the use of Gaelic in job advertisements become normal. In many cases, advertisements are placed in Gaelic only. This section looks at the variety in practice in the language used in job advertisements.

The level of Gaelic in advertisements for 'Gaelic essential' and 'Gaelic desirable' posts is depressed substantially by the remarkable practice of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles Islands Council) of advertising all its posts, even those for Gaelic-medium teachers, in English only. Argyll & Bute Council, which unlike Comhairle nan Eilean Siar has not adopted a bilingual policy, also uses no Gaelic in its job advertisements.

#### Language used in advertising 'Gaelic' posts:

##### Total:

Gaelic only	58.0	35.0%
Bilingual	18.4	11.1%
English only	89.5	53.9%

##### Non-education sector:

Gaelic only	32.0	34.6%
Bilingual	13.4	14.5%
English only	47.0	50.9%

##### Education sector:

Gaelic only	27.0	36.8%
Bilingual	5.0	6.8%
English only	41.3	56.3%

As might be expected, Gaelic is used much more extensively in advertisements for 'Gaelic essential' posts, for which all applicants must necessarily know the language, than in those for 'Gaelic desirable' posts.

#### 'Gaelic essential' jobs

##### Total:

Gaelic only:	49.0	46.5%
Bilingual	17.4	16.4%
English only:	39.0	37.0%

**Non-educational sector:**

Gaelic only	22.0	55.8%
Bilingual	12.4	31.5%
English only	5.0	12.7%

**Education sector:**

Gaelic only	27.0	40.9%
Bilingual	5.0	7.6%
English only	34.0	51.5%

The relatively higher usage of Gaelic outwith the educational sector is primarily to be explained by the failure of two major employers in the educational sector, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and Argyll and Bute Councils, to use Gaelic in any of their job advertisements.

**‘Gaelic desirable’ jobs****Totals**

Gaelic only	10.0	16.5%
Bilingual	1.0	1.7%
English only	49.5	81.8%

**Non-educational sector:**

Gaelic only	10.0	19.2%
Bilingual	1.0	1.9%
English only	41.0	78.8%

**Educational sector**

English only	8.5	100.0%
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It seems somewhat surprising that bilingual advertising was not used more frequently for ‘Gaelic desirable’ jobs, though this may be attributable in part to the added expense involved in running larger advertisements. At the same time, the extent to which advertisements for ‘Gaelic desirable’ posts were published in Gaelic only is noteworthy, while the frequency with which advertisements for ‘Gaelic desirable’ jobs were published in English only may suggest that the Gaelic dimension was not in fact considered especially important by the employers in question.

## Section V

### GAELIC POSTS IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR

A total of **74.5** education sector posts advertised during the period under study were designated as ‘Gaelic essential’ or ‘Gaelic desirable’. Of these **38.5** were primary, secondary, or tertiary teaching posts and **36.0** were pre-school or educational support posts.

**66.0** of these posts were designated ‘Gaelic-essential’ and **8.5** ‘Gaelic-desirable’. In comparison to non-education posts, the geographical distribution was spread out rather more widely throughout Scotland, with only 26.9% of the posts in the Western Isles and Skye. The breakdown was as follows:

Western Isles	9.5	12.8%
Highland	34.5	46.3%
	(Skye 10.5)	(14.1%)
Aberdeen City	1.0	1.3%
Angus	1.0	1.3%
Argyll & Bute	7.0	9.4%
East Ayrshire	1.0	1.3%
East Dunbartonshire	1.5	2.0%
Edinburgh City	2.0	2.7%
Glasgow City	6.0	8.1%
Inverclyde	2.0	2.7%
North Lanarkshire	6.5	8.7%
Perth & Kinross	1.0	1.3%
Renfrew	1.5	2.0%

#### Teaching posts

A total of **38.5** primary, secondary and tertiary teaching posts were advertised during the period in question. All but one of these were explicitly identified as ‘Gaelic essential’, or should be interpreted as such given the inherent nature of the work; the exception was a Learning Support Teacher post in Tarbert, Harris (Comhairle nan Eilean Siar), which was identified as ‘Gaelic desirable’.

Western Isles	3.5	9.1%
Highland	17.5	45.5%
	(Skye 3)	(7.8%)
Aberdeen City	1.0	2.6%
Argyll & Bute	8.0	20.8%
East Ayrshire	1.0	2.6%
East Dunbartonshire	1.0	2.6%
Edinburgh City	1.0	2.6%
Glasgow City	1.0	2.6%
North Lanarkshire	3.5	9.1%
Perth & Kinross	1.0	2.6%

Note that these proportions differ somewhat from the general enrollment in Gaelic-medium education. In 2000-01, the breakdown of pupils in Gaelic-medium primary education was as follows: Western Isles 31.6%, Highland 39.4% (Skye 13.8%), Aberdeen 3.0%, Angus 0.05%, Argyll 5.4%, East Dunbartonshire 1.7%, Edinburgh City 3.65%, Glasgow City 6.2%, Inverclyde 0.03%, North Lanarkshire 3.0%, Perth & Kinross 1.2%, South Ayrshire 1.3%, South Lanarkshire 3.7%, and Stirling 0.07%. The most significant discrepancies are the relatively low level of new teaching posts in the Western Isles and the relatively high level in the Highland Council area outwith Skye. This may reflect the demonstrated preference of teachers with an island background to accept jobs in the islands and the comparative unattractiveness of posts in remoter areas of the Highland mainland.

29 of these teaching posts were in primary schools; 6.5 in secondary schools; and 3 in third-level institutions, as follows:

#### Primary teaching posts

Aberdeen 1, Aird (Lewis) 1, Airdrie 0.5, Bishopbriggs 1, Bonar Bridge 1, Bowmore 2, Condorrat 2, Dunoon 1, Dunvegan 1, Edinburgh 1, Gairloch 1, Glasgow 1, Inverness 1.5, Kilmarnock 1, Lochaber 1, Morar 1, Newtonmore 1, Oban 1, Perth 1, Plockton 0.5, Salen (Mull) 1, Sandwick (Lewis) 0.5, Tain 1, Tarbert (Harris) 2, Thurso 1, Tobermory 1, Ullapool 1

#### Secondary teaching posts

Bettyhill 1, Cumbernauld 1, Dingwall 1, Mallaig 1, Oban 1, Plockton 0.5, Ullapool 1

#### Third-level teaching posts

Oban 1 (2 0.5 FTE, Argyll College), Sleat, Skye (Sabhal Mòr Ostaig) 2<sup>1</sup>

### **Other education-related posts**

**36.0** non-teaching posts in the educational sector were advertised during the period in question, most of them involving pre-school groups. **28.0** of these were identified as ‘Gaelic essential’ and **8.0** as ‘Gaelic desirable’.

The geographical breakdown was as follows:

Western Isles	6.0	16.7%
Highland	15.5 (7.0 ‘Gaelic desirable’)	43.0%
	(Skye 7.5, 1.0 ‘Gaelic desirable’)	(20.8%)
Angus	1.0 (1.0 ‘Gaelic desirable’)	2.8%
East Ayrshire	0.5	1.4%
East Dunbartonshire	0.5	1.4%
Edinburgh City	1.0	2.8%
Glasgow City	5.0	13.9%
Inverclyde	2.0 (1 ‘Gaelic desirable’)	5.5%
North Lanarkshire	3.0	8.3%
Renfrew	1.5	4.2%

The 'Gaelic essential' non-teaching educational posts were as follows:

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar:

Nursery Nurse, Laxdale Primary School, Lewis

Comhairle nan Sgoiltean Àraich:

Playgroup Assistants (Skye & Lochalsh (2 0.5 FTE posts), Lochaber (0.5 FTE), Partick (0.5 FTE), Glasgow South (0.5 FTE), Milngavie (0.5 FTE), East Kilbride (0.5 FTE), Cumbernauld (0.5 FTE)

Principal Development Officer, Glasgow

Development Officer, Dunbartonshire/North Lanarkshire

Development Officer, South Lanarkshire/Renfrewshire/Ayrshire

Administrator, Glasgow

Cròileagan Bhaile Ailein, Lewis:

Play Assistant

Cròileagan Bharabhais, Lewis:

Play Leader (0.5 FTE)

Cròileagan an Taobh Siar, Lewis:

Play Leader

Assistant Play Leader

East Ayrshire Council:

Nursery Teacher, Kilmarnock (0.5 FTE)

Edinburgh University:

Secretary, School of Scottish Studies

City of Glasgow Council:

Clerical Assistant, Glasgow Gaelic School

Glasgow University:

Secretary, Department of Celtic

Highland Council:

Classroom Assistants, Acharacle 0.25, Dunvegan (Skye) 1, Morar 0.25, Plockton 1, Sleat (Skye) 1

Nursery Assistant, Acharacle 0.5 FTE

Nursery Auxiliaries: Acharacle 1.0, Fort William 0.5

Inverclyde Council, Greenock:

Gaelic Playgroup Development Officer

North Lanarkshire Council, Condorrat:

Classroom Assistant

Nurse (0.5 FTE)

North Lochs Play Group, Lewis:

Play Leader (0.5 FTE)

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Sleat, Skye:

Project Coordinator

Distance Learning Coordinator

Receptionist

Stòrlann Nàiseanta na Gàidhlig, Achmore, Lewis:  
Development Officer

The ‘Gaelic desirable’ non-teaching educational posts were as follows:

Angus Council, Forfar:  
Nursery Nurse, Kirkriggs School

Highland Council:

Nursery Assistants: Acharacle 0.5, Ardgour 0.5, Achaphubuil 0.5

Nursery Auxiliaries: Acharacle 1, Arisaig 0.5, Ft William 1, Kilmonivaig 1, Kinlochleven 0.5, Strontian 0.5<sup>2</sup>

South Skye & Lochalsh Gaelic Parents Project, Worker

Inverclyde Council, Greenock:

Nursery Nurse, Highlanders’ Academy

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>As noted, there were also four vacancies for university teaching posts during the period in question but these were not advertised in the *Free Press*, the *Gazette*, or the *Times*.

<sup>2</sup>Note further that an advertisement placed by the Highland Council on 25 May 2000 also sought part-time Classroom Assistants for a number of schools, stating that Gaelic would be desirable ‘for a number of these’, but without specifying which ones. Given this lack of specificity, these posts are not included in the enumeration here. The schools in question were located in Ardgour, Arisaig, Ballachulish, Caol, Duror, Fort William, Glencoe, Invergarry, Inverlochy, Kilchoan, Kilmonivaig, Lochaline, Mallaig, Roy Bridge and Strontian.

## Section VI

### THE MARGINALISATION OF GAELIC IN THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES

A striking finding of the research was the very limited number of ‘Gaelic essential’ and ‘Gaelic desirable’ posts advertised by the local authorities in Skye and the Western Isles, Highland Council and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar. Despite these councils’ formal Gaelic policies, Gaelic clearly does not serve as a normal language for these councils’ internal operations or the delivery of their services. Given the important symbolic and leadership role of the local authorities — and their important role as actors in the regional economy — their failure in this area presents a major challenge for the development of the ‘Gaelic economy’ and for Gaelic development more generally.

#### 1. Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar advertised some **257.5** posts during the period under study. Only **4.9%** of these (**12.5** posts) were specified as either ‘Gaelic essential’ (**6.5** posts or **2.5%** of the total) or ‘Gaelic desirable’ (**6.0** posts or **2.3%** of the total).

##### a. Non-education sector

Outside the education sector, some **194** posts were advertised, but only **1.0%** of these, **2.0** posts (Receptionist at a Comhairle office in Benbecula and Gaelic Youth Worker) were identified as ‘Gaelic essential’. Only **3.1%** or **6.0** posts (Landfill Site Manager/Recycling Officer; Manager, Barra Working for Communities Project; Museum Warders (2); Social Care Workers (2)) were identified as ‘Gaelic desirable’. The remaining 186 posts ranged very widely:

1 Accountancy Assistant; 1 Administrator; 1 Allocations Officer; 1 Architect; 1 Assistant Database Administrator; 2 Assistant Engineers; 1 Assistant Housing Benefit Officer; 1 Assistant Personnel Officer; 2 Assistant Registrars; 1 Audit Assistant; 3 Boat Operatives; 1 Bus Driver; 2 Bus Station Attendants; 2 Café Assistants; 2 Catering Assistants; 1 Chief Executive; 19 Cleaners; 1 Cleaning Supervisor; 4 Clerical Assistants; 1 Clerk of Works; 7 Clerks/Typists; 1 Commercial Services Assistants; 6 Community Education Workers; 1 Community Sports Development Officer; 8 Cooks; 1 Day Care Officer; 1 Development Officer; 2 Dining Assistants; 3 Dining Attendants; 4 Dining Supervisors; 2 Domestic Assistants; 4 Domestics; 2 Electricians; 1 Engineering Technician; 1 External Funding Officer; 2 Handypersons/Caretakers; 1 Health and Safety Assistant; 1 Health and Safety Officer; 1 Home Auxiliary; 6 Home Care Workers; 1 Hostel Officer; 1 Housing Grants Advisory Officer; 1 Housing Officer; 1 Initial Training Assistant; 1 Instructor in Personal Care; 1 Integration Manager; 6 Janitors; 2 Joiners; 3 Kitchen Assistants; 2 Labourers; 1 Landscape Architect; 2 Laundry Attendants; 1 Legal Clerk; 4 Leisure Attendants; 1 Leisure and Recreation Assistant; 2 LGV Drivers; 1 Library Assistant; 4 Mechanics; 3 Nursery Nurses; 1 Nurse; 1 Operation Managers (School Meals); 4 Painters; 1 Plumber; 1 Property Maintenance Officer; 1 Occupational Health Nurse; 1 Plant Waterer; 1 Playground Supervisor; 1 Regional Technician; 1 Resident Engineer; 2 Revenues Assistants; 1 Revenues Officer; 1 Senior Architectural Technician; 1 Senior Environmental Health Officer; 1 Senior Social Care Worker; 1 Senior Librarian; 3 Social Workers; 8 Social Care Workers; 7 Social Care Assistants; 1 Senior Accountants; 1 Sports Coaches; 1 Sports Facilities Managers; 1 Technician’s Assistant; 1 Trainee Solicitor; 1 Youth Centre Drop-in Coordinator; 1 Youth Criminal Justice Team Leader.



It was notable that only specialist/professional posts were designated as ‘Gaelic essential’ or ‘Gaelic desirable’. Gaelic is, however, relevant to a much broader range of posts, including many of a manual nature. For example, in a designated Gaelic school it would be profoundly helpful to the maintenance of a bilingual environment to ensure that all catering and cleaning staff are bilingual.

b. Education sector

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar advertised some **63.5** education-related posts during the period in question. Of these only **3.5 (5.5%)** were designated as ‘Gaelic essential’ and **1.0 (1.6%)** as ‘Gaelic desirable’.

In no case was a knowledge of Gaelic specified as being essential or desirable for a teaching post except when the post actually involved teaching Gaelic. As such, teachers of other subjects in schools with Gaelic-medium units were hired irrespective of any knowledge of Gaelic. This approach is most striking with regard to the hiring of Head Teachers for such schools; during the period in question, several Head Teacher positions were advertised in schools with Gaelic-medium units (Airidhantuim, Lewis; Back, Lewis; Shawbost, Lewis; Uig, Lewis), but in no case was a knowledge of Gaelic specified as a job attribute. Similarly, a number of Depute Head Teacher posts were advertised in such schools (Back, Lewis; Lochs, Lewis; Stornoway), again with no reference to Gaelic. Finally, the position of Director of Education for the Comhairle was advertised without any reference to Gaelic.

This approach has clear negative consequences for the overall linguistic ethos of such schools and provides an illustration of the need for free-standing Gaelic schools to replace the existing Gaelic units within larger English schools (Johnstone 1999).

2. Highland Council

The approach of the Highland Council in Skye was similar to that of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar. The Council advertised some **87.5** posts in Skye during the period under study. Only **13.1%** of these (**11.5** posts) were specified as either ‘Gaelic essential’ (**10.5** posts or **12.0%** of the total) or ‘Gaelic desirable’ (**1.0** posts or **1.1%** of the total). All the ‘Gaelic essential’ posts were in the education sector, and the one ‘Gaelic desirable’ post was that of Piping Instructor; not a single job was designated as either ‘Gaelic desirable’ or ‘Gaelic essential’ across the entire spectrum of the Council’s other activities and services.

The following **73.0** additional posts were advertised.

1 Caretaker; 1 Classroom Assistant; 2 Cashiers; 3 Cleaners; 6 Clerical Assistant/Typists; 1 Community Care Assessor; 1 Community Occupational Therapist; 4 Cooks; 3 Day Centre Officers; 2 Day Centre Support Workers; 1 Dining Room Supervisor; 1 District Registrar; 1 Driver; 1 Harbour Master; 1 Head Janitor; 2 Home Carers; 1 Hostel Assistant; 2 Learning Support Auxiliaries; 2 Leisure Attendants; 3 Library Assistants; 1 Maintenance Technician; 6 Nursery Assistants; 6 Nursery Auxiliaries; 1 Occupational Therapy Assistant; 2 Occupational Therapy Support Workers; 1 Playground Assistant; 2 Playground Supervisors; 1 Refuse Loader/Driver; 1 Resource Centre Manager; 1 Seasonal Roadworker; 1 Secretary to Area Manager; 1 Social Care Worker; 6 Social Work Support Workers; 2 Social Workers; 1 Stores Labourer; 1 Warden; 1 Youth Development Worker.

As in the Western Isles, the designation of posts as ‘Gaelic essential’ or ‘Gaelic desirable’ in schools with Gaelic-medium units appears to be very narrowly circumscribed. For example, on 8 June 2001 the Council advertised for two Classroom Assistants and a Playground Assistant for Dunvegan Primary School. One of the Classroom Assistants was to serve the Gaelic unit and the post was thus designated as ‘Gaelic essential’; for the other posts, however, no reference was made to Gaelic. Such an approach means that a Gaelic ethos cannot be maintained at the school; for example, English is evidently to be the language of the playground.

## Section VII

### THE MARGINALISATION OF GAELIC IN THE DEVELOPMENT SECTOR

Some **49.0** posts were advertised in the community and economic development sector in Skye and the Western Isles during the period in question. None of these were designated as 'Gaelic essential', but **15.0** posts or **30.6%** were designated as 'Gaelic desirable'. Caution is advisable here, however: the unusually low ratio of 'Gaelic essential' posts to 'Gaelic desirable' posts suggests that in many instances Gaelic may have been identified as an advantage to applicants, but not a particularly important one, and that actual hiring decisions may have given little weight to the Gaelic factor.

The following posts in the community and economic development sector in the Western Isles and Skye were designated as 'Gaelic desirable':

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar:  
Manager, Barra Working for Communities Project

Cothrom Ltd [Information Technology project], South Uist:  
Manager  
Project Manager  
Secretary  
Tutor

Iomairt aig an Oir:  
Administrator, Drimshader, Harris  
Local Development Officer, Drimshader, Harris  
Local Development Officer, Uig and Bernera

Lewis & Harris Cattle Producers Group:  
Co-ordinator, Cattle Health Initiative

Pairc and Kinloch Development Group, Lewis:  
Development Officer

Pròiseact Uibhist 2000, Benbecula:  
Project Officer, Language and Culture

Voluntary Action Lewis:  
Project Manager

Western Isles Enterprise:  
Development Officer, Stornoway  
Development Officer, Benbecula  
IT Communications Officer

In contrast, the following **34.0** advertised posts in the community and economic development sector did not specify Gaelic in any way:

Employment Service, Stornoway:  
Administrative Officers (Job Centres)

Harris Development Ltd:  
Development Officer

Highlands and Islands Enterprise:  
Data Centre Manager, Lionacleit, Benbecula  
Training Administration Unit Manager, Lionacleit, Benbecula

Iomairt Nis, Ness, Lewis:  
Summer Activities Co-ordinator

Pròiseact Uibhist 2000, Benbecula:  
3 Project Officers

Shawbost Community Council, Shawbost, Lewis:  
Initiative Development Manager

Skye and Lochalsh Enterprise, Portree:  
Administrative Manager  
Business Information Officer  
Clerical Assistant  
Head of Business Development  
Information Technology Officer  
Skills Development Manager

Skye & Lochalsh Local Learning Partnership:  
ICT Outreach Tutor

Ùrachadh Uibhist:  
ICT Facilitator

Voluntary Action, Barra & Vatersay:  
Economic Regeneration Officer

Voluntary Action Lewis:  
Lifelong Learning Development Officer

Western Isles Careers Service:  
Adult Guidance Adviser  
Trainee Adult Guidance Adviser

Western Isles Chamber of Commerce:  
Chamber Development Manager

Western Isles Enterprise:  
Administrative Assistant  
Development Officer, Property and Infrastructure  
E-business Adviser  
Executive Support Officer  
Marketing Manager

Property & Environmental Projects Officer  
Skills Development Assistant  
Tourism Training Adviser

Western Isles ICT Advisory Service:  
Telephone Canvassing Manager  
Telemarketing Canvassers

## Discussion

It seems clear that strategic organisational thinking is not consistent with regard to the place of Gaelic in community and economic development. Organisations involved in similar work appeared to take varying approaches. For example, Western Isles Enterprise designated a post of IT Communications Officer as ‘Gaelic desirable’ and the Uist-based information and communications technology (ICT) project Cothrom Ltd specified all four of its advertised posts as ‘Gaelic desirable’; but Skye & Lochalsh Local Learning Partnership, Ùrachadh Uibhist, and the Western Isles ICT Advisory Service failed to designate any of their ICT posts as ‘Gaelic essential’ or ‘Gaelic desirable’. Similarly, the Pàirc and Kinloch Development Group (Lewis) designated the post of Development Officer as ‘Gaelic desirable’; while Shawbost Community Council made no reference to Gaelic in its advertisement for an Initiative Development Manager.

The approaches of the local enterprise companies Western Isles Enterprise (WIE) and Skye & Lochalsh Enterprise (SALE) give rise to various questions. WIE designated three posts as ‘Gaelic desirable’ (Development Officer, Stornoway; Development Officer, Benbecula; IT Communications Officer) but failed to do so for the eight other posts listed above. The thinking underlying this variation is not transparent; what is clear, however, is WIE does not view Gaelic competence as a normal and fundamental job requirement for its staff. A systematic commitment to bilingualism is clearly necessary, however, if the agency is to operate on a bilingual basis and to develop a bilingual economy in the Western Isles.

SALE’s approach is clearer but still more problematic: it did not identify a single post as ‘Gaelic essential’ or ‘Gaelic desirable’. Any use of Gaelic by the agency would therefore be coincidental or haphazard, and it is effectively impossible for it to undertake the programmatic development of a bilingual economy in Skye.

## Section VIII

### THE MARGINALISATION OF GAELIC IN THE HEALTH, SOCIAL AND VOLUNTARY SECTORS

One of the most striking findings of the research was the extent to which Gaelic remains almost completely excluded from health, social services and voluntary sector employment in Skye and the Western Isles.

This lack of attention to the Gaelic dimension is particularly important given the heavy concentration of Gaelic speakers in the older age groups of the local population, who make disproportionate use of these services. 71.3% of the over-50 group in the Western Isles and 77.5% of the over-60 age group were recorded as Gaelic speakers in the 1991 census. Many of these older Gaelic speakers will feel much more comfortable in Gaelic than English, and for some using English may become increasingly difficult, particularly when their physical or mental health deteriorates. A bilingual service suited to their linguistic needs is therefore essential in therapeutic terms (Misell 2000).

At the same time, attention to the language factor is also appropriate for agencies or services dealing with younger groups in the population. If Gaelic is to be reinforced in society generally, then youth workers and support services for young families should not simply operate on a default English-only basis.

#### 1. Health services

The two main health service providers in the region — Highland Primary Care NHS Trust, serving Skye, and the Western Isles Health Board, serving the Western Isles — gave almost no attention to Gaelic in their job advertisements. Highland Primary Care NHS Trust did not designate any of its 15 advertised positions as ‘Gaelic essential’ or ‘Gaelic desirable’, while the Western Isles Health Board advertised 61 posts, of which only one was designated ‘Gaelic desirable’, that of Administrative Assistant in Uist & Barra Hospital.<sup>1</sup>

Highland Primary Care NHS Trust:

1 Community Nurse; 1 Dental Nurse; 1 Health Visitor; 3 Nursing Auxiliaries; 1 Project Worker, Terminal Care; 7 Staff Nurses; 1 Trainee Dental Nurse

Western Isles Health Board:

Accounts Assistant; Accounts Clerk; 2 Administrative Assistants; Catering Assistant; Clinical Laboratory Senior Biomedical Scientist; 2 Community Nursing Auxiliaries; 2 Community Staff Nurses; Dental Assistant; Diabetic Specialist Nurse; 2 District Nurses; 2 Domestic Assistants; Fast Action Team Support Nurse; 2 Finance Assistants; Head of Computer Services; Head Cook; 3 Health Visitors; 0.5 Nursery Assistant; 3 Nursery Nurses; Nursing Auxiliary; Organisation Development Officer; Patient Throughput Manager; Pharmacy Assistant; Pharmacy Technician; 2 Physiotherapy Assistants; 2 Public Health Specialists; 5 Registered General Nurses; 2 Registered Mental Nurses; 3.5 Registered Nurses, Grade D; Relief Medical Secretary; Relief Secretary; Relief Staff Nurse; Research Assistant; Senior II Radiographer; 6 Staff Nurses; Technical Support Officer; Ward Manager

The same pattern was apparent with regard to other providers of medical services in Skye and the Western Isles. Some 13 health-related posts were advertised by the Scottish Ambulance Service,

Marine Harvest (a fish-farming company), SERCO (the contractor for the Department of Defence facility in Benbecula), and two local medical practices; none of these were identified as ‘Gaelic essential’ or ‘Gaelic desirable’. The same is true of the various health-related posts advertised by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and the Highland Council.

Benbecula Medical Practice:  
Receptionist/Clerk

Marine Harvest, Stornoway:  
Occupational Health Nurse

North Harris Medical Practice:  
Receptionist

Scottish Ambulance Service:  
1 Ambulance Technician/Paramedic, Dunvegan  
2 Ambulance Technicians, Harris  
2 Ambulance Technicians, Lewis  
4 P/T ambulance technicians, Barra  
Ambulance Technician, Tarbert, Harris  
Ambulance Auxiliary, Tarbert, Harris

SERCO, Benbecula:  
Registered Medical Nurse

## 2. Social Services

The two local authorities in the area, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and the Highland Council, advertised a wide range of posts in the field of social services: **39.0** for Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and **23.0** for the Highland Council. None were designated as ‘Gaelic essential’. Comhairle nan Eilean Siar designated **2.0** social work posts (**5.1%**) as ‘Gaelic desirable’, but no Highland Council jobs in social services were so designated.

In addition, **38.5** posts in a range of social service functions were advertised by a total of 14 private agencies and institutions. Only **2.0** posts (**5.2%**) were designated as ‘Gaelic essential’ or ‘Gaelic desirable’, even though these organisations serve the most vulnerable members of a bilingual community. This neglect is most glaring with regard to the numerous posts at nursing homes and other facilities serving the elderly.

The two ‘Gaelic desirable’ posts (surprisingly both located in Skye rather than the Western Isles) were as follows:

Crossroads Care, Skye & Lochalsh:  
Care Attendant

Skye & Lochalsh Mental Health Association:  
Outreach Worker

There was no reference to Gaelic with regard to the following 36.5 posts:

Alzheimer Scotland, Dunvegan, Skye:  
Daycare Worker

Bethesda Nursing Home & Hospice, Stornoway:  
Head Cook  
2 Staff Nurses

Blar Buidhe Nursing Home, Stornoway:  
1 Care Assistant  
2 Staff Nurses  
2 State Enrolled Nurses  
1 Stand-in Warden

Church of Scotland Board of Social Responsibility, Portree (residential care facility for the elderly):  
4 Care Workers  
1 Cook  
1 Night Care Worker  
1 Relief Domestic Assistant

Counselling and Family Mediation Service, Uist:  
Assistant to the Co-ordinator

Crossroads Care, Lewis:  
Attendant Scheme Coordinator

Family First (support service for young families in rural Highland), Skye:  
Co-ordinator

Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, Leverburgh Residential Care Home (for the elderly):  
Depute Officer in Charge

Kirk Care Housing Association, Stornoway (residential home for the elderly):  
2 Domestic  
2 Project Workers

NCH Action for Children, Pròiseact nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles):  
2 Child Care Workers  
P/T Project Worker  
Senior Project Worker  
2 Relief Workers  
2 Support Workers

Penumbra: Supporting Mental Health:  
Information and Publicity Assistant

Residential Care Home (unnamed), Skye:  
Care Assistant

Skye & Lochalsh Community Care Forum:  
Young Carer's Project Worker

Western Isles Community Care Fora:  
Clerical Assistant



It appears that the decision to identify a particular job as ‘Gaelic desirable’ is dependent on specific circumstances or individuals rather than institutional policies or a more general awareness of issues relating to bilingualism. For example, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar designated 2 Social Care Worker posts as ‘Gaelic desirable’ but failed to do so in the case of 19 seemingly similar posts advertised during this period.

In addition, as in the development sector there are inexplicable differences in the ways organisations involved in similar work deal with Gaelic. For example, the post of Outreach Worker for the Skye & Lochalsh Mental Health Association was designated ‘Gaelic desirable’, but the post of Daycare Worker for Alzheimer Scotland in Dunvegan was not.

### 3. Other voluntary sector

Above and beyond the range of council jobs advertised above, there were some **27.0** posts advertised in the voluntary sector more generally. Here too, the Gaelic dimension was almost completely overlooked; there were no ‘Gaelic essential’ posts and only **1.0** post (**3.7%** of the total) was designated ‘Gaelic desirable’, that of Centre Manager/Outreach Worker for the Skye & Lochalsh Council for Voluntary Organizations.

The remaining 26.0 posts were as follows:

Claddach Kirkibost Centre (training centre/nursery), North Uist:

Administrative Assistant

Centre Manager

Co-ordinator

Nursery Manager

2 Nursery Nurses

Nursery Supervisor

Columba 1400 (community leadership training centre), Staffin, Skye:

Administrative Assistant/Receptionist

Assistant Cook

Assistant Programmes Coordinator

Caretaker

Head Cook

House Coordinator

2 Housekeeper

Sales and Marketing Coordinator

Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, Skye:

Development Officer

Highland Shinty Development Officer, Skye

Kirk Care Housing Association Ltd:

Project Co-ordinator (development of a sheltered housing complex)

Lewis & Harris Youth Clubs Association:

Scaladale Centre Manager

Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust:

2 Development Officers

Lochalsh & Skye Housing Association:  
Handyperson

Scottish Crofters Union, Broadford, Skye:  
Administrator

Skye and Lochalsh Council for Voluntary Organisations, Portree:  
2 Administrative Assistants

Tighean Innse Gall (Western Isles Housing Agency), Stornoway:  
Office Manager  
Office Junior

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Note that from November 2000 onwards job advertisements by the Western Isles Health Board included a statement in Gaelic at the bottom providing its address in Gaelic from which application forms could be obtained and noting the Board's status as an equal opportunity employer. This use of Gaelic seems essentially symbolic as there does not seem to have been any accompanying increase in the designation of jobs as 'Gaelic essential' or 'Gaelic desirable'.

## Section IX

### THE MARGINALISATION OF GAELIC IN THE COMMERCIAL, POSTAL AND TOURIST SECTORS

Gaelic was almost completely absent in the central sector of the regional economy in Skye and the Western Isles: the private for-profit commercial sector. Gaelic also had no role at all in the provision of postal services and almost no role in the work of the local tourist boards.

#### 1. Commercial sector

As noted above, a total of **88.2** advertised posts were designated as ‘Gaelic essential’ or ‘Gaelic desirable’ in the Western Isles (**62.1**) and Skye (**26.1**) during the time period under study. This number forms a very small fraction of the overall number advertised, some 1,800. The principal factor is the ongoing exclusion of Gaelic from the private commercial sector; the Gaelic economy remains almost entirely a creature of public funding.

Neoclassical economics teaches that profit-seeking companies would provide Gaelic-medium services (and hire the Gaelic-speaking staff required to deliver them) if a genuine and sufficiently weighty consumer demand were demonstrated (Grin 1993). The fact that ‘Gaelic essential’ and ‘Gaelic desirable’ jobs have not emerged in the private commercial sector — even for the provision of goods and services at a strictly local level — suggests that the growth of the Gaelic economy in recent years has not altered basic patterns of language use in Skye and the Western Isles. With limited exceptions, then, English remains the language of work and business in the region, and Gaelic speakers remain accustomed to carrying out their work and business through English.

This is clearly a crucial failing in the development strategy adopted up to now. Significant change is required to address this shortcoming. Absent progress on this front, the very existence of a genuine ‘Gaelic economy’ must be questioned.

#### 2. Postal services

The Royal Mail advertised some **15** posts in Skye and the Western Isles during the period in question, seeking delivery personnel in Broadford/Breakish, Carbost, Portree, Raasay, and Uig (Skye); and in Balivanich (2), Bernera, Castlebay, Lochboisdale, Lochmaddy, and Stornoway (4).

Not a single post was designated either as Gaelic-essential or Gaelic-desirable.

The approach of the Royal Mail in Skye and the Western Isles differs dramatically from that adopted in Wales, where the company has committed itself to a range of proactive steps in recruitment, including the designation of appropriate posts as ‘Welsh essential’ and ‘Welsh desirable’ (Post Office 1997: 17).

### 3. Tourist services

The Highlands of Scotland Tourist Board advertised **7** posts in Skye (Broadford, Dunvegan, Portree and Uig) during the period in question. None were designated as Gaelic-essential or Gaelic-desirable.

The Western Isles Tourist Board advertised **11** posts during the period in question. No jobs were designated as Gaelic-essential, and only one, that of Tourism Niche Marketing Manager, was designated as Gaelic-desirable.

The failure to attend to the Gaelic dimension in tourist services suggests that attempts to market the language and culture of the Highlands and Islands to tourists will not be based on a serious institutional Gaelic development initiative.

## Section X

### MISCELLANEOUS PROBLEMS AND INCONSISTENCIES

One of the most disappointing findings of the research was the failure of certain organisations with a marked Gaelic ‘image’ to use Gaelic within their own operations. In some cases these entities receive, or have received in the past, substantial funding for purposes of Gaelic development. For example:

- the cultural centre Aros in Portree, Skye advertised **11** posts during the period in question. Not a single one was designated either ‘Gaelic essential’ or ‘Gaelic desirable’;
- the Gaelic music festival Ceòlas, based in South Uist, advertised for an administrator but did not designate the post as ‘Gaelic essential’ or ‘Gaelic desirable’, and advertised for a Development Officer with the faint and highly ambiguous description ‘you are interested in Gaelic’;
- Hotel Eilean Iarmain in Sleat, Skye advertised some **6** posts during the period in question. Not a single one was designated either Gaelic-essential or Gaelic-desirable.

Another problem, noted above in other contexts, is that of inconsistent institutional approaches to the role of Gaelic. For example, although the Royal Society for the Preservation of Birds designated the post of Uist Warden as ‘Gaelic desirable’, it failed to do so for the posts of Information Warden based at Aros, Portree and Uist Wader Recovery Project Officer. Similarly, the Crown Office/Procurator Fiscal designated as ‘Gaelic desirable’ the post of Administrative Officer in Lochmaddy, North Uist, but the Scottish Executive Rural Affairs Department in Benbecula failed to do so with regard to the post of Administrative Assistant.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this report present a serious challenge to those involved in Gaelic development. The creation of a niche ‘Gaelic economy’ has been a significant achievement, but there has been disappointingly little progress towards the more fundamental goals of normalising Gaelic as a language of public and consumer services and of building a bilingual regional economy in the Gaelic-speaking areas of Scotland. Surprisingly little appears to have changed since the early 1980s with regard to the use of Gaelic as a language of public communication and internal administration (Mackay 1984: 53). The near-total reliance on public subsidy, and the near-total exclusion of Gaelic from the private commercial sector, are grounds for profound concern.

If meaningful progress is to be achieved on these fronts, all providers of public, social and consumer services in the Gaelic-speaking areas should carefully evaluate their response to the challenge of operating in a bilingual environment. This is particularly true for those providers that profess a concern about the situation of Gaelic and a commitment to its development. In the context of personnel policy and recruitment, the significance of language and language skills is critical; as one experienced commentator has pointed out, “‘best’ in a monolingual environment doesn’t necessarily mean the best in a bilingual one’ (Mackay 1984: 55). If Gaelic is to flourish, and a genuinely bilingual environment is to be fostered, proactive action is needed from all parties, and the unreflective, default practices of a monolingual Anglophone environment must be superseded.

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