

The Future of French en Écosse Forum 2025: The way ahead

June 2025 marked the second edition of the Future of French *en Écosse* Forum. Drawing on the success of the first edition held at the University of Strathclyde in June 2024, a second edition of the forum took place on 23 June 2025 at the University of Edinburgh in partnership with SCILT, Scotland's National Centre for Languages, the [Institut français d'Écosse](#) and the [Franco-Scottish Society](#).

Context

The [Language Trends Scotland 2024/25](#) report shows that while every Scottish learner is exposed to French in Primary Education, in 2024 only 2,300 sat a Higher French (a 50% drop compared with 2015) and 380 an Advanced Higher (a 43% drop compared with 2015). As French teachers, this steep decline in retention is worrying and raises questions. It impacts the quality of teaching and learning, notably at Senior phase level – with measures such as consortia between schools, mixed-language classes and reduced choice of languages, or indeed no choice, seen as acceptable solutions. It also undermines the future of French as a sustainable degree subject in universities and in the long term, the teaching of French as fewer students at universities means fewer future teachers.

In this context, having a place and a time to share experiences and plan for a better future for French in Scotland is more important than ever.

The forum was divided into four parts.

Part 1 - Listening to learners' voices

95 people attended the forum which opened with a presentation of a national survey of 436 learners from primary and secondary schools across Scotland on their perception of the French language and francophone cultures. Key findings are summarised below:

1. Learners do not hate French!
2. They want to do more talking and hear more French in class
3. They want culture to be a key part of lessons

These findings were compared with interviews conducted at the University of Edinburgh and an international survey carried out by the Institut français. Both studies corroborated the outcomes of the learner survey.

Part 2 - Panel discussion

A panel of experts, chaired by Professor Lorna Milne, discussed the current position, and possible future trajectories, of French teaching and learning in Scotland.

Part 3 - Sharing examples of successful initiatives

Attendees then had the opportunity to attend a series of workshops and presentations around two themes:

Transitioning towards more meaningful activities

Using **creative writing, project-based learning** and the [Concours de la Francophonie competition](#) as a boost for developing language skills and cultural knowledge.

Transitioning from one phase to another

Using **student-based** programmes and **school-university/college** collaborative initiatives to ease transitions between phases.

Part 4 - Creating a road map for the future

In the last part of the forum, attendees were divided into groups from various backgrounds with two objectives:

Objective 1 - Discuss the questions raised in the first part of the day:

1. How can culture be (more systematically) embedded in our teaching?
2. Why don't we use more French in the classroom?
3. How should we reshape assessment?

The outcomes of these discussions are visible in Appendix 3 – Pledge wall.

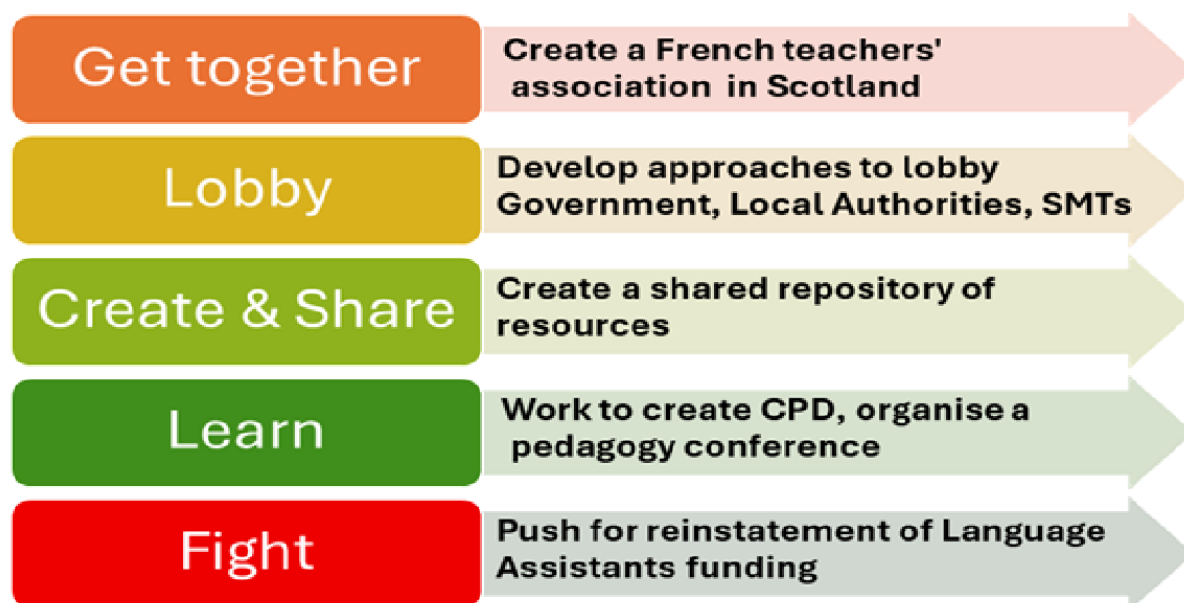
Objective 2 - Define individual priorities in daily teaching, as well as priorities for the sector over the next 12 months.

What next?

The energy deployed, the passion and dedication shown towards the teaching of French at all levels, the willingness to change individual practices, and the appetite to connect and share approaches in a more coordinated way were palpable during this year's forum.

From the collectively created road map, it appears that **WE** the practitioners, individually in our everyday work, in our classrooms, but also **WE** as a collective, in a structured way, must become key players in creating a positive and sustainable future for French in Scotland.

In this road map, the attendees indicated the direction to take. It will start with the **creation of a French teachers' association** for Primary, Secondary and Higher Education in Scotland - register via the sign-up link at the bottom of the page. The forum will offer a new platform to support the other key objectives defined in the road map:



Over the last few months, good news has surfaced. Some schools are once again able to welcome Language Assistants, an increased number of school trips are being organised, and the University of Aberdeen will host the 3rd edition of the Forum on the Future of French *en Écosse*. **Things are moving in the right direction; we hope the tide CAN be turned.**