

THE FUTURE OF
FRENCH X
EN ÉCOSSE

French Forward >>

Workshop 1:

11:40-12:25 and 12:30-13:15

Employability - Advocating for French Language skills, busting AI and Brexit myths

Leanne Duncan, Laura Morris,
Lauren Cameron, Katie Rogen,
Fiona Williamson



ASMCF

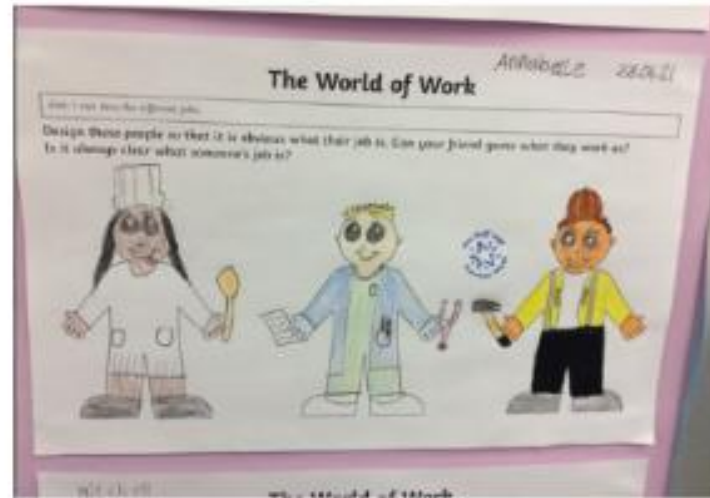


Partnerships between schools and organizations

Danestone Primary / Subsea 7
Mintlaw Academy / Oui Oui Caudalie

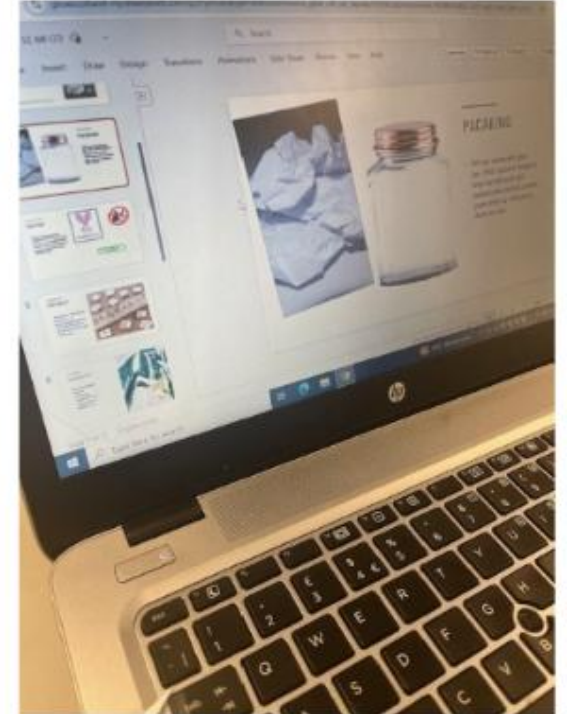
Danestone Primary School's Bronze SCILT employability award

- Leanne Duncan (Depute Headteacher, Seaton Primary School)
- Partnership with Subsea 7
- [Workshop 1 - Leanne Duncan.mp4](#)
- Learned about the importance of languages in a real-life context
- Tied in with World of Work week
- Blog, article on the SCILT website: [Danestone Primary School](#)



Mintlaw Academy's Bronze SCILT employability award

- Laura Morris (Depute Headteacher, Turriff Academy)
- Interdisciplinary project in French with local skincare company Oui Oui Caudalie
- [Mintlaw Academy](#) on SCITL website
- Learning about chemistry, sustainability, and marketing through the medium of French.
- Please open separate presentation



To take these
ideas further



Employability

We work with businesses and schools to build capacity in language and employability skills.

Employability:

Toolkit for
schools

Toolkit for
business

Careers
Advice toolkit

Toolkit for young people
and their families

The case for
languages

Employability
Award

Job
profiles

Developing skills for life and work

Scottish Languages Employability Award

The Scottish Languages Employability Award (SLEA) is awarded by SCILT. It helps schools and businesses to build partnerships through languages in order to develop young people's learning about the world of work, the value of language skills, and global and intercultural competencies.

There are currently four different awards under the SLEA umbrella. These are:

SLEA



Perspectives from stakeholders across sectors where French language skills, international experience and intercultural competence strengthen employability

Journalism – Lauren Cameron (The Inverness Courier)

Tourism – Katie Rogen (Absolute Escapes)

International executive education – Fiona Williamson (ESCP Business School)

From French to journalism

- Lauren Cameron (The Inverness Courier)
- [Link to presentation](#)

Adam Crafton, sports reporter (The Athletic, The New York Times)

- 'It wasn't until my work experience placement at one of the UK's largest selling newspapers, when I was speaking to a couple of writers and discussing what I might go on to study at university, that **I realised my language skills would be a real asset in the newsroom.**'
- 'it is easier to build a **good rapport** with someone if you can speak to them in their native tongue.'
- 'Yes, it is easier to build a relationship with the players when you speak their language. This is because they are not worried about saying the wrong word or having to over think their answers because they are not sure how to explain it in English. It also helps with their reps and management teams, because access to these individuals is getting increasingly hard. **By speaking another language I have built up my own professional credibility, making everyone involved feel more comfortable that, when the interview is written, nothing will be misunderstood.** Approaching reps in their native language is also **helpful when trying to get access** – it shows that you are making an effort.'
- [Language learning, journalism and sport | Cambridge English](#)



Tourism

Katie Rogen

(Absolute Escapes)

- Sectorial context (2018):
- [Up to the Brexit referendum] tourism organisations have been largely reliant on EU nationals for their technical and ‘soft’ language skills [...]
- Of the 78 institutions offering tourism and/or hospitality undergraduate programmes in the UK, **only 25 offer languages** as part of their tourism/hospitality curriculum.
- 45 institutions offer 87 postgraduate tourism/hospitality programmes – yet **only 6% of these programmes offer a language**, as an optional module.
- From a sample of 43 higher education institutions that offer a single honours modern language degree programme, **only 16 mention tourism as a career prospect**.
- [Tourism language skills crisis uncovered in new report | UKinbound](#)



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TOURISM LANGUAGE SKILLS CRISIS UNCOVERED IN NEW UKINBOUND REPORT

Publish date: 19th Jun 18



UKinbound has released a [report](#) that uncovers a growing language skills gap facing the UK tourism industry, caused by a combination of Brexit and the decline of language training in the UK.



*How French language skills,
international experience and intercultural competence
strengthen employability*

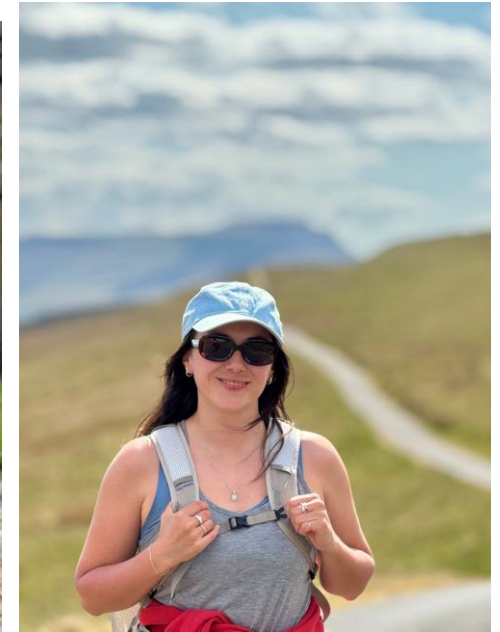
Katie Rogen
Senior Travel Specialist (Absolute
Escapes)

My background

- **2021:** Graduated from UoA with a MA (Hons) **French and Hispanic Studies**

During year abroad (2018-19), I spent 6 months in Dol-de-Bretagne as a teaching assistant at College-Lycée Saint-Magloire and 5 months in Valledupar, Colombia for a tourism internship.

- **2021-2022:** Worked as *lectrice* at the Université Savoie Mont Blanc in Chambéry within the LLCER department (*Langues, Littératures et Civilisations Étrangères et Régionales*)
- **2023:** Secured an internship with Absolute Escapes as a Travel Specialist in Operations Team. Permanent contract in late 2023, joining the Operations Team.
- **2025:** Promoted to Senior Travel Specialist within the Sales & Business Development Team



Absolute Escapes



Absolute Escapes winning AITO* Gold for Tour Operator of the Year in 2024
(*Association Independent Tour Operators)

808 AITO Reviews 99% 

West Highland Way ready-to-book holidays for September 2026 are now available, with first-choice accommodation guaranteed and every detail expertly taken care of >

Incredible journeys, crafted by experts

Walking Holidays >

Self-Drive Holidays >



Absolute Escapes is an independent Travel Operator based in Edinburgh, specialising in walking and tailor-made holidays in the UK and Ireland.

Walking Holidays: *Long-distance, multi-day self-guided walking holidays*

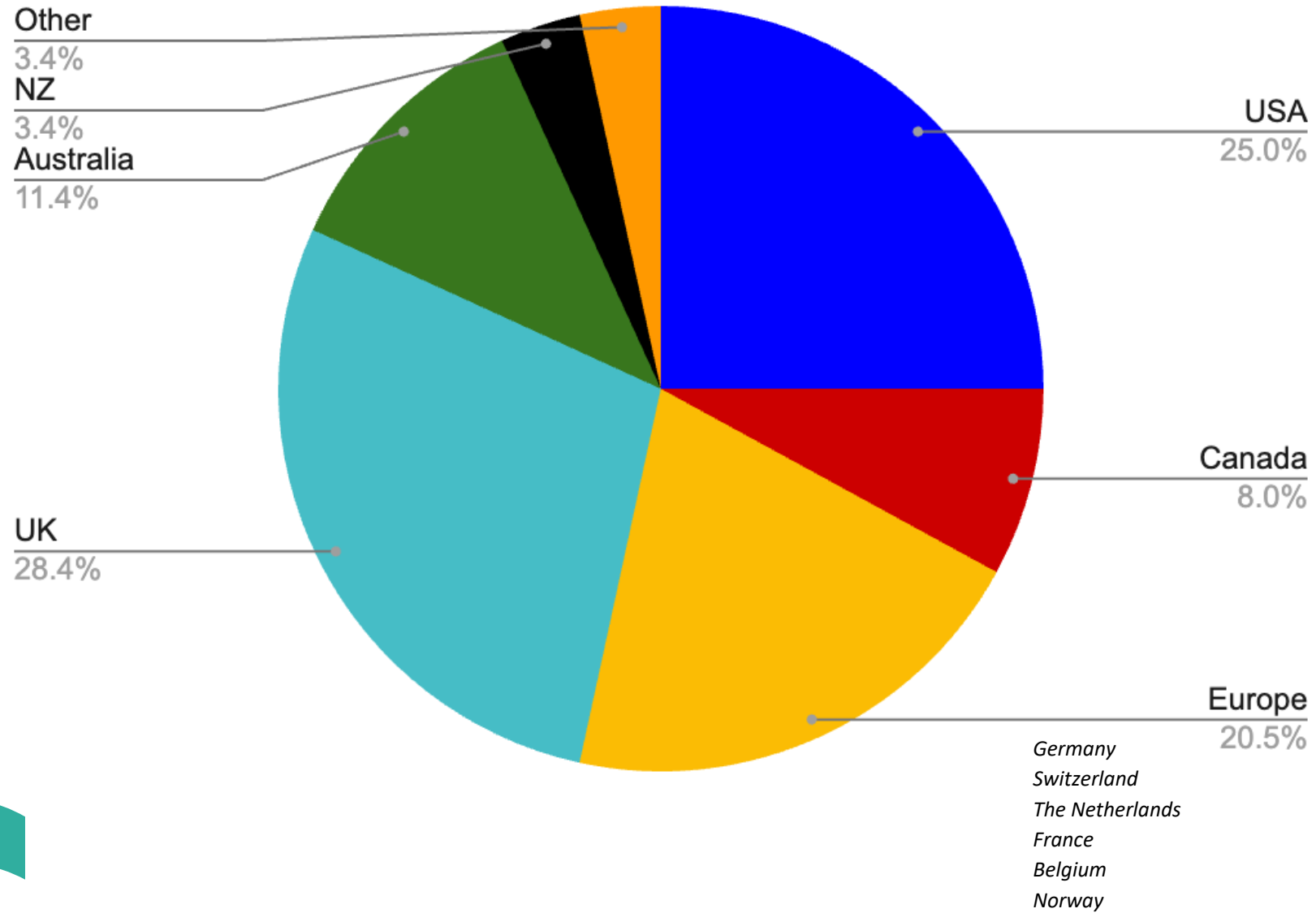
→ e.g. West Highland Way, Hadrian's Wall Path, South West Coast Path, Skye Trail, Kerry Way, Coast to Coast.

Tailor-made: *Bespoke road trip and train holidays*

→ e.g. Scotland by Train, North Coast 500, Hebridean Island Hopping, Great British Road Trip, Wild Atlantic Way



Top Nationalities of Clients at Absolute Escapes (2015-2025)



My role

Senior Travel Specialist within the Sales & Business Development Team

What does this involve?

- Reviewing and allocating new enquiries we receive (suitability, availability, requests)
 - Working with clients as their dedicated point of contact
 - Corresponding - email, video call, in person (occasionally) to build itinerary and understand needs of client / route planning
 - Prepare holiday package proposal, including cost pricing and itinerary/proposal creation
 - Supporting our Team Lead in managing our team and reaching quarterly and yearly targets
-
- Once confirmed, clients passed to Operations Team who finalise bookings, focus on logistics and supplier communication.
 - Information Pack: writing/prepare itineraries: accurate info, up to date
 - Business development: competitor analysis, assistance with marketing campaigns and blog writing (guide/inspirational content showcasing knowledge and expertise)
- 

How did my French degree help me secure my role?

- Strong interpersonal skills
- Cultural awareness necessary with communicating with clients from all nationalities - understanding cultural nuance
- Desire to promote Scottish (and British & Irish) tourism to global audience
- Organisation
- Linguistic skills: only one other French speaker in the team (of 23)
- Currently, I'm the only french speaker in my team who can correspond with francophone clients
- Adaptability
- working with new people (of different nationalities and language)

Current employees with languages degrees (*Total staff: 23*)

Katie (Senior Travel Specialist) - **French** & Hispanic Studies

Daisy (Operations Manager) - **French** & Spanish

Zoe (Senior Travel Specialist & Team Leader) - Spanish

Kate (Senior Travel Specialist & Team Leader) - Spanish & German

Past employees with languages degrees (*within last 3 years*)

Travel Specialist Intern - Spanish

Travel Specialist - **French** & Spanish

Senior Travel Specialist - English Literature & **French**

Operations & Systems Manager - German & Sociology

What does this show?

Absolute Escapes seeks (and attracts) French language graduates due to the skills acquired from our degrees and international experience.



**Communication /
interpersonal skills**

**French language
competency**

Adaptability

**What skills have I gained from
my French language degree that
have driven the success of my
role/career in tourism?**

**Cultural
awareness /
empathy**

**Engagement in
international
relations**

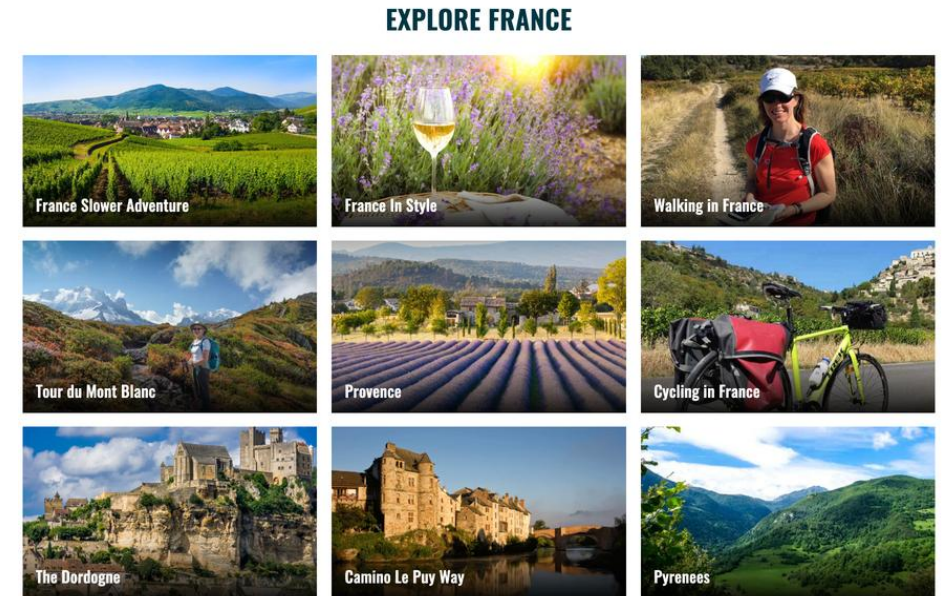
**Writing skills
(professional &
creative)**

How can French language skills be further used in this sector?

- **More staff able to communicate with/support Francophone clients** (while also possessing a knowledge of UK/Ireland geography/travel industry)
- **When expanding our business into Europe** (i.e. offering packages in France & Switzerland). This will create the need for larger french skill base to develop packages/translate website/documentation/liase with francophone suppliers

e.g. [MACS Adventure](#) - competitor offering tours in France (walking/cycling)

- 5 year plan to expand to Europe for Absolute Escapes (obstacles: Brexit, competition from local competitors, financial setback from COVID)



Examples of tours currently offered by MACS Adventure in France

Merci de votre attention !



From commercial consulting to executive education

Fiona Williamson (ESCP Business School, London campus)

THE FUTURE OF FRENCH

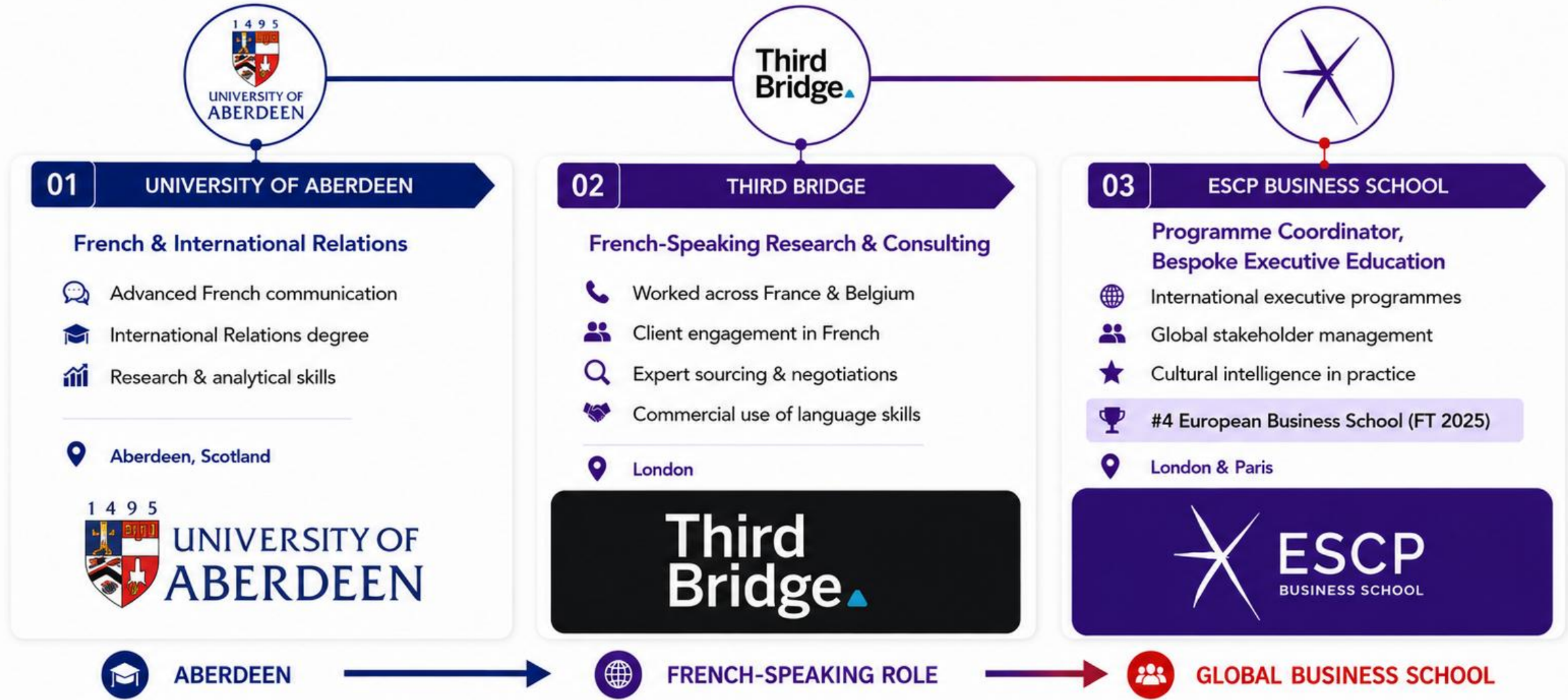
Employability - Advocating for French
Language Skills, busting AI and Brexit myths

FIONA WILLIAMSON

Programme Coordinator,
Bespoke Executive Education
ESCP Business School

MA (Hons) French & International Relations
University of Aberdeen

Career Pathway: How French Opened Professional Doors



French as a Commercial Skill at Third Bridge

Third Bridge



1 FRENCH-SPEAKING TEAM

- Worked in a French-speaking research team.
- Engaged directly with clients across France, Belgium and EMEA markets.



2 CLIENT ENGAGEMENT

- Managed daily tasks including screening calls in French.
- Assessed expertise and built strong client relationships.



3 CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE

- Navigated cultural differences with sensitivity and awareness.
- Adapted communication styles to build trust and credibility.



4 BUSINESS IMPACT

- Built trust and understanding with clients.
- Contributed to successful business outcomes.



LANGUAGE SKILLS



CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS



COMMERCIAL VALUE



CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Why Employers Still Value French



Value of Intercultural Communication

Employers value intercultural communication and the ability to work internationally



Global Presence of French

French is an official language
in 25+ countries



Use in International Organisations

Used by major international
organisations including the
UN, EU, OECD, and NATO



French, AI, and the Future of Language Work



AI Strengths and Limitations

AI can support translation, research, and efficiency—but still struggles with what makes communication truly effective.



Supports translation and research



Improves efficiency and scalability



Struggles with context and cultural nuance



Lacks relationship-building and judgement



Language Graduates' Unique Role

Language graduates are uniquely positioned to bring human insight, cultural intelligence, and communication leadership to the future.



Assess tone and meaning



Evaluate cultural fit and nuance



Bridge technology with human communication



Lead with empathy, clarity and judgement

ESCP Business School: A Model of French Opportunities



FOUNDED IN PARIS IN 1819

One of the world's oldest business schools with a distinguished legacy.



LONDON CAMPUS ENHANCES DIVERSITY

Part of a global network that enriches learning across cultures.



OPERATES ACROSS SIX COUNTRIES

France, the UK, Germany, Spain, Italy, and Poland.



CULTURALLY RICH ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Builds intercultural competencies that are highly valued in today's global job market.



STRONG FINANCIAL TIMES RANKINGS

Recognised for excellence among Europe's top business schools.



COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE & INNOVATION

A continuous focus on excellence and innovation in business education.



Beyond Employability: Life Skills and Worldview



Building Independence, Confidence, and Adaptability

International experience that builds independence, confidence, and adaptability.



In a post-Brexit world, intercultural understanding and language skills are more important than ever.



Expanding Networks and Unique Experiences

Friendships, professional networks, and experiences beyond what you'd encounter otherwise.



Brexit makes strong European networks and partnerships a key advantage for future careers and collaboration.



Developing a Broader Worldview

A broader worldview that helps you approach problems from perspectives beyond your own.

French: Unlocking Opportunities and Life Skills



Broaden Career Pathways

French opens doors to careers in business, education, diplomacy, consulting and international organisations.



Develop Essential Skills

Build confidence, adaptability, critical thinking and resilience — skills for life.



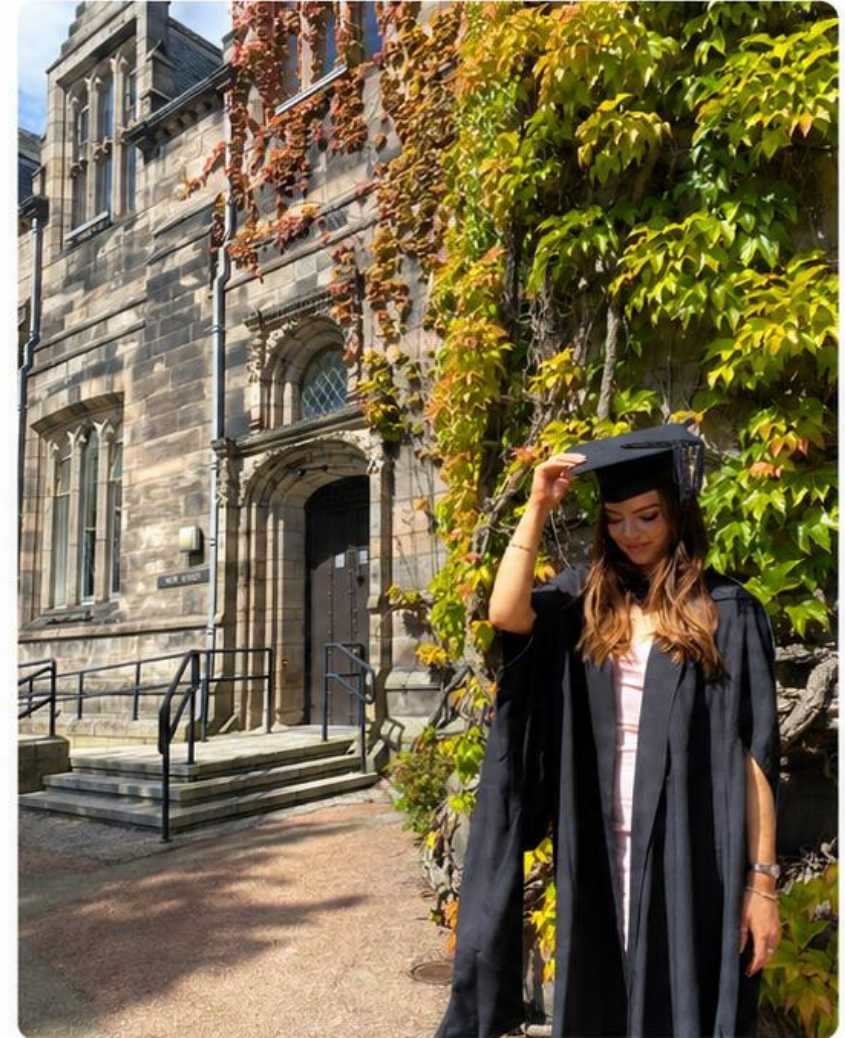
Cultivate Intercultural Competence

Understand new perspectives, cultures and ways of thinking.



Enjoy the Journey

More than a degree. Friendships, experiences and opportunities that stay with you long after graduation.



Q&A – C'est à vous!

A thick, hand-drawn style orange line that underlines the text above it, extending across the width of the text.

Further resources on French / Languages and employability

- German and French remain by far the most sought-after languages on the UK job market: [Top in-demand languages for professionals in the UK \(2026\) | City Lit](#)
- SCILT's [Business case for languages](#)
- Employability resources on [The Languages Gateway](#)
- The new [Scottish Arts and Humanities Alliance \(SAHA\)](#) report 'Languages in a Global Scotland' is now available to download. See <https://saha.scot/new-report-argues-that-languages-and-intercultural-studies-are-key-to-creating-a-global-scotland-for-the-benefit-of-all/>
- Breakdown of transferable skills derived from language degrees:
<https://assets.uea.ac.uk/f/185167/08e44a509a/uea-languages-and-skills-powerpoint.pdf>

By sector

- Journalism:

[Language learning, journalism and sport | Cambridge English](#)

- Travel and tourism:

<https://www.ukinbound.org/resources/breaking-the-language-barrier-full-report/>

- Diplomacy and intelligence and national security:

[Britain risks losing language skills to understand its enemies](#)

[The procession of university language closures will trip up UK diplomacy | Times Higher Education \(THE\)](#)

[Britain's diplomats are monolingual](#)

- AI careers and context:

[How studying languages could help protect you in the AI race and future-proof your career](#)

[Languages & AI - new roles for linguists](#) (podcast episode)

[Language specialists are needed in AI engineering](#)

[Translating Europe Forum - Multilingualism, translation and language-based AI services](#): The Translating Europe Forum is scheduled to take place November 2026.

This hybrid event serves as a platform for dialogue between the EU institutions and the wider language sector. Under the theme "Language professionals matter: Adding value in a changing industry", the 2026 edition will address the evolving role of human expertise within the translation profession.

- Export and recruitment:

[making-the-case-for-languages-report.pdf](#)

- Accountancy:

[The Value of Language-Speaking Accountants - IN2 Consult](#)