

Shaping the Future of Languages in Scotland

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Date: Friday 28th February 2025

Location: University of Strathclyde, Learning & Teaching Building, Jocelyn Bell-Burnell Wing, Level 3, Room TL329, 49 Richmond Street, Glasgow, G1 1XU

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Programme

- 9:00 - 09:30 **Registration**, Tea/Coffee and pastries
- 9:30 - 10:00 **Where are we now?** Current landscape of Languages in Scotland: Louise Glen | Senior Education Officer | Languages | Education Scotland
- 10:00 - 12:00 **Presentations**
- **Primary/Secondary Education**
Speakers: Lisa Hanna, Depute Director, SCILT and Crista Hazell, Independent Languages Consultant; Jonathan McBride, Churchill Fellow, The Edinburgh Academy
 - **Higher Education**
Speakers: Dr Fiona Barclay, UCFL Chair of Scotland; Prof Paul Bishop, Honorary Professorial Research Fellow, University of Glasgow
 - **Private Industry**
Speakers: Eric Balish, Head of Corporate Coverage at ABC International Bank; Georgi Tsaklev, Senior Software Engineer at Skyscanner

SHAPING THE FUTURE OF LANGUAGES IN SCOTLAND



Figures from Scotland's education sector, government, and private industry convened for a symposium on the future of language education in Scotland.

- platform to assess Scotland's linguistic landscape, examining the progress of the 1+2 Language Policy, the impact of shifting enrolment trends in higher education, and the wider societal and economic values around language learning.
- Discussions centred on innovative strategies to sustain and enhance language learning from primary school through university, ensuring Scotland remains competitive in an increasingly globalized economy.

Where are we now? Current landscape of Languages in Scotland: Louise Glen | Senior Education Officer | Languages | Education Scotland

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- **Private Industry**

Speakers: Eric Balish, Head of Corporate Coverage at ABC International Bank; Georgi Tsaklev, Senior Software Engineer at Skyscanner

Roundtable Discussion

Panel: Fiona Barclay, UCFLS; Louise Glen, Education Scotland; Laura Morris, Co-Chair LANGS; Mark Pendleton, CEO Coffeebreak Languages; Student Voice: Johnny Orr, Languages Graduate of University of Glasgow, Andrew Ward MEng Electronic and Electrical Engineering with International Study

(Paul Sheerin, Chief Executive, Scottish Engineering)

Where are we now? Current landscape of Languages in Scotland

Louise Glen



Reassessing the 1+2 Policy The Curriculum Improvement Cycle



Scotland's Language Education at a Crossroads: Calls for Reform and Innovation

Primary/Secondary Education

Lisa Hanna, Depute Director, SCILT and Crista Hazell, Independent Languages Consultant



Challenges: multi-level classes
Community of practice
What attracts young people to languages



Building Sustainable Language Learning Pathways



Primary/Secondary Education: Jonathan McBride, Churchill Fellow, The Edinburgh Academy



Challenges in Teacher Workload and Professional Development



Rethinking Language Assessment and Immersion



Innovative Teaching Methods: Storytelling and International Models

Higher Education

Dr Fiona Barclay, University of Stirling, UCFL Chair of Scotland



The Future of Language Education: Challenges and Innovations



Global citizens

Senior phase of schooling = boost the UK's GDP



series of innovative, non-financial strategies

to create a more resilient language education system, embedding linguistic studies more deeply into the academic structure rather than relying on fluctuating government funding

Higher Education

Prof Paul Bishop, Honorary Professorial Research Fellow, University of Glasgow



Reconceptualising Modern Languages in Higher Education



Commerce – Culture – Content



Private Industry

Speakers: Eric Balish, Head of Corporate Coverage at ABC International Bank; Georgi Tsaklev, Senior Software Engineer at Skyscanner



Language Education: A Key to Unlocking Economic Growth and Global Competitiveness



Localization and Multilingual Skills: A Strategic Advantage

Roundtable Discussion

Panel: Fiona Barclay, UCFLS; Louise Glen, Education Scotland; Laura Morris, LANGS; Mark Pendleton, Coffeebreak Languages; Paul Sheerin, Chief Executive, Scottish Engineering; Student Voice: Johnny Orr, University of Glasgow Languages Graduate, Andrew Ward MEng Electronic and Electrical Engineering with International Study



Broadening Language Pathways: The Need for Interdisciplinary Integration



Rethinking Language Education: Lessons from Adult Learners



The Future of Language Learning: Challenges and Opportunities

**Perceptions vs.
Reality: The
Myth of
Difficulty**

**Target
Language Use
and
Confidence**

**The Role of
Cultural and
Social Value**

**A Disconnect
in Progression**

**The Gender
Gap in
Language
Learning**

The Way Forward

To secure the future of language education, systemic changes are needed:

1. **Promoting confidence** – Shifting focus from perfection to communication and embracing mistakes as part of the process.
2. **Embedding cultural value** – Increasing the visibility of language learning through public discourse, media, and employer recognition.
3. **Ensuring consistent exposure** – Structuring curricula to prevent long gaps between lessons and reinforcing target language use.
4. **Challenging misconceptions** – Addressing myths about difficulty and emphasizing language attainment as a pathway to success.
5. **Encouraging diversity** – Investigating and tackling gender disparities in language learning participation.

Ultimately, language learning must be reframed as a lifelong skill with tangible benefits, not just an exam subject. If young learners can see the long-term value, they may be more inclined to persist—unlocking the confidence, adaptability, and intercultural skills that language proficiency provides.

Reflections & Output

Series of articles to

- redress the media narrative
- promote collaboration in CIC
- support policy work (innovative, non-financial strategies to create a more resilient language education system)

What is the future for languages in Scotland?

Reversing the decline in languages can benefit the country as a whole – and schools have a pivotal role to play in providing opportunities, say Kerry Roberts and Lidia Acosta





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