



Program Guide

What is the Zero to Gaelic Program?

The Zero to Gaelic Program is a supported self-study program developed by the Gaelic Education Committee of Slighe nan Gaidheal. Its goal is to help individuals plan and pursue their study of Scottish Gaelic while taking maximum advantage of the education opportunities offered by Slighe nan Gaidheal.

Will I be fluent when I'm done?

That's mostly up to you. Learning a language as an adult is a challenge, and we are dedicated to helping you out in any way that our all-volunteer organization can. Our syllabus covers all the basics of how Gaelic works, and if you master those skills, and work on your listening and speaking, then you can take that accomplishment as far as you wish.

How is the program structured?

We have developed a three-year syllabus of topics covering all the basics of the language. We present classes covering the syllabus at day-long Saturday intensive days.

We invite a mix of local and out-of-area presenters to teach the classes outlined in the syllabus. Our guest presenters are free to use any methods or materials they like to cover the scheduled subjects. If you wish to press ahead and finish in fewer than three years and possibly skip ahead to a higher level, we applaud and encourage your ambition!

How many Saturday intensives happen each year?

We produce six intensive days each year, in September or October, November, December, February, March and April. We also offer two Language Enrichment Days, normally in January and May. The specific dates are usually available before the beginning of the program year.

Is there a textbook that I need to buy?

The Zero to Gaelic syllabus is tied to *Scottish Gaelic in Twelve Weeks* by Roibeard Ó Maolalaigh (2008 and newer), published by Birlinn Limited. It is strongly recommended that participants purchase the book which comes in a set with three CDs. These CDs will assist with pronunciation practice between Gaelic Intensive Days (GIDs). The ISBN number for the set is 978-1-84158-6441.

Do I have to pre-register to participate?

Pre-registration is greatly encouraged. Our pre-registration deadline for the program year usually falls in mid-September. The number of pre-registrants guides our decisions whether to offer all levels of study each program year. Walk-ins are welcome at GIDs, assuming that the appropriate level of study is being offered. First-time participants should contact the Gaelic Education committee via slighe.com for guidance to the most appropriate level. Absolute beginners to Gaelic are welcome to start during the first two GIDs of the program year.

What do you mean by supported self-study?

Unlike a traditional adult language course, which would have participants attending at least weekly classes with homework, tests, and other features, Zero to Gaelic was designed for busy people who can't always make scheduling commitments. The trade-off is that in order to truly master the material covered in the program, additional effort is necessary for most people.

What other kinds of things might I need to do?

We encourage our participants to meet casually between GIDs to study and practice conversation. We also set up a spam-free e-mail list for participants moving through the program. We hope that you will use the list to discuss your studies with others in the program.

What happens if I miss one of the intensives?

One of the advantages of having a syllabus and textbook is that you'll know what was covered at any intensive that you can't attend. Study the material in the textbook and contact your presenter for assessment. In the event that the material was presented by a guest presenter, the Gaelic Education Committee can direct you to another presenter for assessment.

Do I have to be a member of Slighe nan Gaidheal to participate?

No. Members receive discounts when they attend Slighe nan Gaidheal events, however, so joining is encouraged!

Can I join the program at any time?

Up to a point, yes. We begin a new group of participants each year in the fall (normally October). A very dedicated and self-motivated beginner could possibly join a group already in progress if they were able to catch up on their own, or with private help from one of our local teachers. Once the program year has been going for several intensives, however, it might be better to wait until the following fall to join. If you have any questions about either possibility, please do contact a member of the Gaelic Education Committee to discuss it.

If you've already been studying Gaelic and want to join the second or third level groups, or Ceum Suas, our level for program graduates or those with Gaelic from other sources, just contact us and we'll help you figure out which one is closest to your level.

Will I have the same presenter throughout my participation?

No. Although we generally have the same presenter for each level throughout the curricular year, we believe that a variety of teaching styles, accents, and areas of expertise will help people learn more broadly.

What happens if I register for a class and it is cancelled?

If we don't have enough registered participants to offer a class and we cancel it, then you will receive a full refund and we will work to place you with a private Gaelic teacher who can help you continue with your studies.

If I work with a private teacher, can I still get my completion pin?

Yes! You can make up missed GIDs with a private teacher so long as you have attended at least 50% of the GIDs over 3 years. Those joining the program in years 2 or 3 can discuss with the committee how they can qualify for a pin.

How do I get in touch with the Gaelic Education Committee?

1. Come and see us at a Zero to Gaelic intensive day
2. Email nchamber7@comcast.net
3. Leave us a phone message at 206.903.9452
4. Use the "Contact Us" form on the Slighe.org home page
5. Write us a note at:
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