

Official Language Certifications and the Celtic Languages: An Overview of Relevant Offerings

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Abstract: *The six extant members of the Celtic family of languages (Breton, Cornish, Irish, Manx, Scottish Gaelic, and Welsh) can be found in the British Isles and the north-western coast of France. Once widely spoken, centuries of marginalisation and minoritisation have meant that these languages presently enjoy varying degrees of linguistic vitality. Of the modern Celtic languages, only Irish is an official language of an independent nation-state and since 2007 it has also received supranational recognition as an official language of the European Union. In developing the researcher's previous work on qualifications available for minority and minoritized languages, the main focus of this contribution is on analysing the official language certifications available for the six Celtic languages, centring on those qualifications targeted at adult candidates. Initially, after briefly defining the historical and sociocultural context relating to each of the six languages, this exploratory literature-based study highlights current certifications by detailing the awarding body and organisational structure for each qualification, before presenting information about accreditation and recognition. Lastly, the scope and availability of each language certification at the national and international level will be discussed, before the findings will be analysed to explore any similarities and differences between the various qualifications on offer.*

Keywords: *language testing, minority languages, Breton, Irish, Welsh, Cornish, Manx, Scottish Gaelic*

Introductory remarks

With ever-increasing demands for global communicative competence for academic and professional purposes, language qualifications remain in high demand. Accordingly, there is a wide variety of certifications and tests available for many international, national, and minority languages worldwide. Given that proficiency in additional languages to the L1 is often acquired through formal study (be it through school, university, self-study, or extramural courses), assessment and evaluation can also take various forms and approaches depending on the personal and professional needs of teachers and learners. Taking the Celtic languages as a linguistic grouping, the aim of this preliminary contribution is to outline, contextualise and compare the certifications currently available for those languages. The intention here is to provide test participants, teachers, and researchers with useful and relevant information for further analysis. With language qualifications aimed at

varying target groups, including within the Celtic languages, the focus of the current study is on those language proficiency examinations aimed at adult learners. More specifically, attention will be centred on those credentials which are available independently of attending any mandatory language course beforehand, and where the principal focus is based on testing core active and passive language skills (reading, listening, writing, and speaking) rather than any specific knowledge of literature, culture, linguistics).

In gauging the proficiency attained by test-takers, a revolutionary development in language certification has been the implementation of the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which has been in force since 2001 (Council of Europe). Through a series of positive descriptors linked to a six-level competency-based scale,¹ the CEFR has enabled the straightforward comparison of linguistic skills across all languages. For those qualifications aligned to the scale, it allows test candidates, teachers, and examination awarding bodies a convenient framework for assessment and evaluation. Several relevant testing institutions are also Full Members of the Association for Language Testers (ALTE) in Europe, an international body which upholds quality in this domain (ALTE "Our Full Members").

Comprising part of the author's current project on aspects of language certifications in a variety of contexts, the present work is linked to the author's earlier study which compared the available certifications for three minority languages: Catalan, Irish, and Upper Sorbian (Hoyte-West "Exploring Official Certifications"). In analysing the case of Irish, it was observed that – as the far as the author could ascertain – no prior research had been conducted which examined the range of language certifications available for the six Celtic languages which are spoken at present. Moreover, given that all of the languages have been subjected to similar external pressures in both historical and modern times, it was also clear that as members of the same linguistic family spoken primarily within a relatively concentrated geographical area (the British Isles and north-western France), the Celtic languages also provide a suitable framework for additional exploration. Accordingly, the present study adopts the following structure. Firstly, relevant information regarding the sociohistorical and sociolinguistic context of the Celtic languages will be given. After outlining the selected research questions, the available provision of certifications for each language will be presented, after which they will be discussed in comparative terms.

¹ The six levels of the CEFR are: A1 and A2 (Basic User); B1 and B2 (Independent User); and C1 and C2 (Proficient User).

The Celtic languages: A brief overview

Comprising an independent branch within Indo-European, the Celtic languages could be found across Europe in ancient times; indeed, Continental Celtic dialects were spoken up until the fourth or fifth century A.D. However, the six modern Celtic languages are all part of Insular Celtic, itself divided into two linguistic sub-groups – Q-Celtic (Irish, Manx, and Scottish Gaelic), and P-Celtic (Welsh, Cornish, and Breton). Five of these languages are spoken within the British Isles, whereas Breton, despite its classification as an Insular Celtic language, is spoken in Brittany, a peninsula in north-western France (MacAulay “The Celtic Languages” 2-6).

Of these six languages, four of them (Breton, Welsh, Irish, and Scottish Gaelic) have been spoken as native tongues uninterruptedly in the relevant geographical areas, albeit within a considerably smaller area than in medieval and early modern times. The remaining two (Cornish and Manx) were spoken natively until the 1770s in Cornwall and until the 1970s on the Isle of Man. Though debates remain as to whether these languages ever did die out completely, it is clear that their resurgence is largely a product of efforts made in the late twentieth century (Thomas “The Cornish Language” 346; Thomson 101-102). Indeed, a common thread linking all six of the languages is that they have all, at various points in history, been oppressed through the imposition of dominant ideologies. Beginning in medieval times, as the Celtic-speaking lands were incorporated into the so-called “composite monarchies” (Elliott 48) which would eventually become the modern nation-states of Great Britain and France, the corresponding importance of the Celtic languages diminished greatly in favour of the major national languages of English and French. This dominance was exerted in various ways and means, with examples including Henry VIII of England’s legal acts to remove the status of Welsh and Irish in the first half of the sixteenth century (Thomas “The Welsh Language” 252; Cahill 115-116). In the nineteenth century, the tragic and controversial event of the Great Famine in 1840s Ireland had a lasting impact on the vitality of Irish (Cahill 120; Ó Ceallaigh, Ní Dhonnabhain 181), as did the legacy of the Highland Clearances in northern Scotland on Scottish Gaelic (Kandler, Unger, Steele 3857). With the rise of compulsory education in the second half of the 1800s, speakers of the Celtic languages were viewed unfavourably up until at least the mid-twentieth century. Schoolchildren in Brittany were strongly reprimanded for using Breton during school hours (Adkins 55), a situation that did not change until very limited scope for Breton language classes was brought in the 1950s (Price 811); for many years, pupils in Wales who were caught speaking Welsh were forced to wear a wooden board around their necks (Hodges 305). In addition, prolonged contact with English (and French in Brittany),

combined with a lack of social prestige, led to a situation of diglossia (Ferguson) emerging. In this context, the Celtic languages occupied the ‘L’ or lower status in the linguistic hierarchy. Dwindling intergenerational transmission had precipitated language shift (and in the case of Cornish and Manx, arguably language death), which meant that by the twentieth century the prognosis for the continued vitality of the Celtic languages was not particularly positive (Kandler, Unger, Steele 3856-3858). Though efforts to improve the status of these languages through the creation of relevant linguistic and cultural organisations were noted even in the nineteenth century (for example, regarding Scottish Gaelic see MacAulay “The Scottish Gaelic Language” 145-146), modern efforts in the latter half of the twentieth century have largely accelerated the process with varying degrees of success. Glanville Price, writing in the mid-1990s, observed that “the pessimistic conclusion to any survey of the Celtic languages in the late twentieth-century must be that they are all at risk” (Price 812). In addition, as observed just over a decade ago in the UNESCO *Atlas of the World’s Languages in Danger*, “there are many issues concerning their endangerment status” (Salminen 38) and it is apparent that in the first years of the current millennium, the Celtic languages do remain vulnerable.

In common with many minority and minoritised languages (for example, Upper and Lower Sorbian), there can be some challenges in calculating the number of speakers of the different Celtic languages. Writing in the early 1990s, Donald MacAulay observed that there were around 500,000 “valid speakers” of Breton, Irish, and Welsh and around 80,000 speakers of Scots Gaelic (MacAulay “The Celtic Languages” 3). Citing various official sources from the few years immediately before their 2017 article, Noel Ó Murchadha and Bettina Migge draw attention to the fact that Welsh is used daily by over 360,000 people, whereas just under 80,000 speak Irish daily in the Republic of Ireland; in terms of numbers of speakers rather than daily use, there are around 200,000 speakers of Breton, 60,000 speakers of Scottish Gaelic, over a thousand Manx speakers, and a few hundred Cornish speakers (Ó Murchadha, Migge 2). In addition, they draw attention – as does Donald MacAulay (“The Celtic Languages” 3) – to the existence of very small diaspora communities of Welsh speakers in Argentina (the region of Patagonia) and of Scottish Gaelic speakers in Canada (the province of Nova Scotia) (Ó Murchadha, Migge 2). Despite the differences in numbers and calculations of usage, what is clear, however, is that the Celtic languages are not as widely spoken as most members of the Romance, Germanic, and Slavic language families.

In terms of the contemporary situation, the only Celtic language to be the official language of an independent nation state is Irish. As highlighted by

Mark de Blacam (90), the Irish constitution designates Irish as the first of the two official languages of the Republic of Ireland; it is also the sole ‘national’ language. In addition, Irish has been one of the 24 official and working languages of the European Union (EU) since 2007 (Hoyte-West “On the Road”), although because of a shortage of linguists its full implementation in the EU institutions has only occurred after 1 January 2022 (Hoyte-West “Some Characteristics”). Turning to Wales, Welsh is generally seen to be the most vibrant of the Celtic language in terms of its number of speakers. For just over a decade, the language has held official status in Wales, making the country bilingual. Indeed, part 1, section 1, of the *Welsh Language (Wales) Measure* (2011) notes that Welsh should be treated “no less favourably than the English language”; this piece of legislation has also created wide-ranging ameliorations for the use and promotion of Welsh in wider public life. With regard to Scottish Gaelic, the Gaelic Language Act of 2005 accorded the language legal parity with English within Scotland (Nance 617). On the Isle of Man, the Manx Language Strategy 2022-2032 aims to see the numbers of Manx learners and speakers more than double over the next decade to a total of 5,000 (Culture Vannin); in addition, the resurgence of the language has been the subject of recent international media coverage in the *New York Times* (Specia). In Cornwall, the Cornish language recently celebrated the twentieth anniversary of its official recognition by the British Government (BBC News), with the numbers of learners and new speakers continuing to rise (Dixon). And in Brittany, from 2008 onwards Breton – together with certain other minority languages of France – has been recognised in the country’s constitution; the Breton-related ramifications of the recent *Loi n° 2021-641 du 21 mai 2021 relative à la protection patrimoniale des langues régionales et à leur promotion* (Légifrance “Loi n° 2021-641”) (Law on the ‘Protection of the Heritage Character of Regional Languages and their Promotion’) and the consequent Constitutional Decision (*Décision n° 2021-818 DC du 21 mai 2021* (Légifrance “Décision n° 2021-818”)) still remain to be ascertained (for more information, see Cramer Marsal).

Noting the importance of language-in-education/acquisition planning policies within broader language policy and planning approaches (for example, see Kaplan, Baldauf; Wright; etc.), and given that this may be especially important when dealing with adult learners of vulnerable minority languages (Baker, Andrews, Gruffydd, Lewis 41), it is notable that courses for adults are available for all six Celtic languages. Indeed, the various dossiers on minority languages in education published by the Mercator Centre (Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning) provide a valuable overview of the current situation. For Irish, in observing that sometimes the boundary of adult and further

education may be blurred in the Republic of Ireland (Ó Murchú 46-47), provision is made for a variety of community-based courses, university-linked part-time diploma programmes, as well as intensive courses in traditionally Irish-speaking areas. In Wales, Welsh for Adults (*Cymraeg I Oedolion*) is a government-funded community-based learning scheme for adult learners to acquire skills in the language (Jones 48-49); as observed even in the mid-1990s, there were “thousands of adults who [were] attending classes to learn Welsh as a second language” (Lloyd 802). As for Scottish Gaelic, Robertson (33) highlights that attendance at evening language classes is possible in the majority of Scottish towns and cities. And regarding Manx, there is a variety of government-supported initiatives and voluntary projects for teaching the language to adults, with evening classes possible at the Isle of Man College (McArdle, Teare 36-37). For Cornish, the adult educational situation appears to be largely based on regular classes organised by private associations, which nonetheless can receive limited support from the local council (Sayers, Davies-Deacon, Croome 33). Turning to the Breton context, the tuition opportunities for adult learners there include weekly classes as well as intensive short courses. In addition, there are also longer intensive programmes (up to nine months) for adults to acquire proficiency in Breton from scratch; these are offered by private intensive language schools, although state financial support can be given in some circumstances (Vallerie, Bouroulleg 35). Regarding all of these adult learning opportunities, it is important to note that these courses cater to varied publics, ranging from language professionals, heritage speakers, and other interested parties, including migrants from elsewhere. Given the focus of this study is on independent language certifications rather than specific courses, it is also noteworthy to underline that there are other ways to acquire linguistic competencies, especially in minority contexts (Gremmo, Riley 153). These methods can include online language teaching and tutoring platforms, as well as the online language-learning tool Duolingo, which at present boasts courses for Irish, Welsh, and Scottish Gaelic.² For Cornish, the recently launched Go Cornish online portal offers learning materials, apps, and other virtual provision which is suitable for adult learners and also school pupils (Go Cornish “All Learners”).

Methodological approach and research questions

In recognising the large body of research focussing on aspects of language testing, which includes, for example, the proceedings of the specialist conferences on the topic organised periodically by ALTE (for more

² For more information, please see <https://www.duolingo.com/>.

information please see Docherty, Barker; ALTE “Collated Papers”; ALTE “Learning and Assessment”), it became apparent during the preparation of the current study that more research could be focused on those certifications relating to minority and minoritised languages, especially with regard to the modern Celtic languages presented above. In building on the findings of the researcher’s previous work (Hoyte-West “Exploring Official Certifications”), this exploratory desk-based project relies on the evaluation of internet sources to provide an overview of the relevant situation for language qualifications in the six Celtic languages. These sources comprise the websites of the relevant qualifications, supplemented where necessary by other pertinent information.

Though the restricted nature of an internet-based study is of course clearly apparent, it can be argued that the novelty and potential value of the topic researched exceeds any potential limitations. Accordingly, recognising the preliminary and exploratory characteristics of the current study, four research questions were devised:

- i. What are the relevant language certifications available for the Celtic languages?
- ii. Who is the awarding body for these language certifications?
- iii. Which levels are available for these language certifications?
- iv. What degree of recognition do these language certifications have at the national and international level?

Irish

The *Teastas Eorpach na Gaeilge* (TEG), the European Certificate in Irish, has been available since the year 2005, with the examination being offered by Maynooth University’s Centre for Irish Language (Maynooth University “Centre for Irish Language”). The Centre is a Full Member of ALTE and additionally, the TEG qualifications have received the ALTE Q-Mark, an international indicator of quality (Maynooth University “International Q-Mark”). At present, five of the six CEFR levels are available for testing (TEG A1 to TEG C1); no C2 level qualification is currently available (TEG “TEG Levels”). The credentials can be used for various purposes in the Republic of Ireland – to satisfy the requirements for certain teacher training courses (TEG “TEG & PME”), to prove the requirements for specific scholarships requiring advanced linguistic proficiency (TEG “TEG & Advanced Irish”), as well as for civil service posts (TEG “TEG & the Civil Service”). As such, a press release (Maynooth University “International Q-Mark”) highlighted that the TEG qualifications were to become even more important in Ireland’s public administration, given that in the light of legal and governmental initiatives to

promote Irish, the TEG syllabi are also to be incorporated into the language training offered to civil servants. In terms of availability, the TEG examinations can be undertaken at venues in the Republic of Ireland and also in Northern Ireland; the 2022-2023 examination calendar also states that four levels of the examination (TEG A1 to TEG B2) will be available in Paris (TEG “Exam Dates”); it has previously been offered elsewhere in Europe and in North America.

Welsh

For the Welsh language, the relevant official certifications form part of the Welsh for Adults suite of language qualifications (*Defnyddio'r Gymraeg*). Though awarded independently of attendance at specific courses, nonetheless the Welsh for Adults qualifications are closely linked to language courses of the same name mentioned in Jones (48-49). The credentials have been available since the early 2000s, replacing older qualifications (Powell, Smith 55), and are currently offered by the WJEC, a body which is also responsible for a large number of secondary-school, further, and vocational qualifications (not solely language-related) that are mostly offered in Wales (WJEC “Welcome”). A Full Member of ALTE, four levels aligned to the CEFR are offered at present, ranging from *Mynediad*/Entry A1 up to *Uwch*/Advanced B2 (WJEC “Welsh for Adults”). Additionally, a further *Hyfedredd*/Proficiency level examination appears to have been previously mooted (Powell, Smith 58), but does not seem to be currently extant. WJEC’s status as an official examination awarding body means that the qualifications are fully accredited, serving as proof of competence in the Welsh language. In addition, given the links between the examinations and the series of adult learning courses mentioned above, it appears that current examinations are located within Wales only at present.

Breton

The qualification available for adult learners of Breton is the *Diplôme de Compétence en Langue* (DCL) [Diploma of Language Competence]. The DCL is an official state diploma awarded by the French Ministry of Education; as at 2023, it is available in four specialisations, focusing on foreign languages for professional purposes, French for professional purposes, regional languages, and French Sign Language. Breton, together with Occitan, the Romance minority language spoken in southwestern France, comprise the current members of the “regional languages” specialisation (Ministère de l’Éducation nationale et de la jeunesse). As observed previously (Cramer Marsal), the status of regional languages remains a somewhat topical and sensitive issue in France. The DCL

qualifications for Breton and for Occitan (the Romance minority language spoken in southwestern France) were approved by the Ministerial decree of 13 December 2010 (Légifrance “Arrêté du 13 décembre 2010”) and have been made available to test-takers since 2011 (Région Bretagne “Passez votre diplôme”). The DCL examination structure consists of a single test covering four levels of the CEFR, from A2 to C1 level. Subsequent to satisfying the necessary requirements, the candidate receives a given CEFR level commensurate with their performance in the examination. (Ministère de l’Éducation nationale et de la jeunesse). As a state qualification awarded by the French government, it is recognised by the relevant bodies and institutions, and also holds the Eduform national quality accreditation. Centres are available across Brittany and the entry fees are covered by the regional government through its language policy initiatives (Région Bretagne “Évaluez votre niveau”). The exam is also recommended for adult learners who have completed the professionally focused intensive Breton language courses (as previously mentioned) which were designed to acquire proficiency in Breton within a concentrated period of time (see, for example Stumdi; Roudour).

Cornish

Given that modern-day Cornish had its resurgence in the latter decades of the 20th century, it is interesting to observe that there are two possibilities for learners seeking to certify their language proficiency. The first is offered via *Kesva an Taves Kernewek*, the Cornish Language Board, which was founded in 1967 to promote the language and its culture (Kesva an Taves Kernewek “Keyndir”). The examinations offered are not currently aligned to the CEFR, but recent specifications link the qualifications to school-level examinations in most parts of the United Kingdom: the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and the A-level³ (Kesva an Taves Kernewek “Steus 1a, 2a, 3a ha 4a Gradhow”). The Cornish examinations comprise a set of four levels, ranging from Grade 1 (beginners) to Grade 4 (advanced) (Kesva an Taves Kernewek “Apposyansow”). Success in the highest level allows candidates to become a Bard of the Cornish language (Broadhurst 4). Examination entry appears to be focussed locally (though Cornish classes are also available online and in London), and these graded qualifications are not nationally accredited at present. Turning to the second Cornish certification option (*WJEC Kernewek Nivel Entrans/WJEC Entry Level Cornish*), this is a

³ In England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) is commonly taken by secondary school pupils around the age of sixteen; the A-level is usually taken by eighteen-year-olds and qualifies them for university entrance.

relatively new qualification at beginner level offered by WJEC, the same examination board which offers the suite of examinations for Welsh. It is nationally recognised, although it is not accredited by ALTE. It was commissioned by Cornwall Council in 2018, together with the Go Cornish learning resources mentioned earlier, and was piloted there among adults (Go Cornish “New WJEC Cornish”; Broadhurst 5). Given the newness of this qualification, however, it remains to be seen if further examination provision will be developed in the future.

Manx and Scottish Gaelic

For the two remaining Celtic languages in this study, the review ascertained that neither languages currently has a language qualification aimed specifically at adult learners. For those wishing to verify their proficiency in Manx, there is the possibility of sitting one of the qualifications which, though aimed at school pupils, are also available for adult learners (McArdle and Teare 36-37). With Manx enjoying a degree of rising vitality through language-in-education programmes, examinations are available at two levels. Offered by the Manx Language Service, which is part of the Isle of Man’s Department of Education, Sport and Culture, the first is the *Teisht Chadjin Ghaelgagh* (TCG), which is considered equivalent to the GCSE level. The second is the *Ard-Teisht Ghaelgagh* (ATG), an advanced certification viewed as equivalent to an A-level qualification (Manx Language Service).

For Scottish Gaelic, awards are available from the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), the national accreditation body responsible for organising qualifications in the wide range of subjects taught in secondary and further education. As with Manx, adult learners of Scottish Gaelic can also avail of the opportunity to sit school-based examinations as external candidates. The SQA offers a range of Gaelic language qualifications at varying levels, making a crucial distinction between those aimed at native/L1 speakers and those focused on learners of the language (SQA “SQA Provision”). In terms of the latter, the ‘Gaelic (Learners)’ qualifications are available at the National 3, 4, and 5 levels.⁴ In addition, subsequent qualifications are also available at Higher and Advanced Higher level, which qualify students for university entrance (SQA “Gaelic (Learners)”). In terms of proficiency, these do not appear to be matched to the CEFR; however, as observed previously, these qualifications are not aimed at adult learners. However, there have been some moves at national level towards encouraging evaluation of Scottish Gaelic language skills. This includes the CLAG

⁴ Scotland has a different education system than the rest of the United Kingdom: the National 5 examinations are viewed as equivalent to the GCSE qualifications.

(*Comasan Luchd-ionnsachaidh na Gàidhlig*) Framework, which aimed to ease speakers' self-assessment of their skills Scottish Gaelic by aligning them with the requirements of the CEFR. It is supported by several relevant organisations, including Bòrd na Gàidhlig, the national Gaelic Language Board in Scotland (University of Aberdeen). However, the process should be monitored to see how it will evolve in the future.

Discussion and concluding remarks

In the light of the information presented above, the following table depicts the options in those languages where relevant qualifications for adult learners are available and are aligned to the CEFR.

Level	Irish	Welsh	Breton
CEFR C2	-	-	-
CEFR C1	TEG C1	-	DCL Breton (A2-B1-B2-C1)
CEFR B2	TEG B2	<i>Uwch/Advanced B2</i>	
CEFR B1	TEG B1	<i>Canolradd/Intermediate B1</i>	
CEFR A2	TEG A2	<i>Sylfaen/Foundation A2</i>	
CEFR A1	TEG A1	<i>Mynediad/Entry A1</i>	-

Table: CEFR-aligned qualifications in the Celtic languages for adult learners.

Based on TEG (“TEG Levels”); WJEC (“Welsh for Adults”); and Ministère de l’Éducation nationale et de la jeunesse.

Focusing on the research questions, four (Breton, Cornish, Irish, and Welsh) of the six Celtic languages have certification programmes available for adult learners. These are awarded typically by universities (Irish), and nationally accredited qualification awarding bodies (Welsh, Breton, and Cornish (WJEC)). As depicted in the table, three of the qualifications are aligned with the CEFR (Irish, Welsh, and Breton), and two of the relevant awarding organisations are Full Members of ALTE, with Irish even holding that organisation’s Q-Mark. A variety of levels of certification are currently available, ranging from A1 to C1 (Irish), A1 to B2 (Welsh), and A2 to C1 (Breton). Interestingly, at present no C2-level qualification appears to be

currently available for any of the Celtic languages. The current review has also shown that language qualifications are also available for Cornish, Manx, and Scottish Gaelic. In the instance of Cornish, specific credentials suitable for adults are organised by two different organisations. For Manx and Scottish Gaelic, adults wishing to certify their proficiency can sit school qualifications. In terms of recognition, most of the certifications available are officially accredited at least at the national level, with the exception of the Graded Examinations for Cornish. In the case of both Irish and Welsh, these are also accredited at the international level through ALTE recognition. Regarding the scope and availability of the qualifications, it appears that the certifications analysed here are primarily available within the areas where the relevant Celtic language is traditionally spoken. At present, only the TEG certifications for Irish appear to be available overseas.

In terms of practice, and keeping in mind the work involved in creating, organising, and evaluating language testing procedures, it is apparent that there could be sufficient opportunities to promote and develop these qualifications in the future. Indeed, with the shift to online teaching, assessment, and evaluation during the COVID-19 pandemic, there could perhaps be considerable scope to increase the accessibility of such qualifications through offering them virtually or online, thus making them available to a wider pool of potential test-takers across the globe (for example, students of Celtic Studies at international universities).

Turning to research-based perspectives, this preliminary review has revealed a number of interesting paths for further analysis within the Celtic context. To supplement the initial findings presented here, further quantitative- and qualitative-based research could be conducted with a variety of key personnel. This could include surveying test-takers and candidates to ascertain their reasons and motivation for acquiring the certifications; asking language teachers and adult education specialists for their views on the credentialling process; as well as contacting policymakers responsible for developing and enacting language-in-education policies and approaches to promote the wider usage and increase the vitality of the relevant languages. Moving outside of the Celtic world, further work could also compare similar certification schemes existing for other minority and minoritised languages; for example, this could include analyses of qualifications available for less widely spoken Germanic, Romance, and Slavic languages spoken in the European context.

To conclude, this review has illustrated that, notwithstanding their status as minority languages, a variety of certification options for adult learners are available for the Celtic languages. Indeed, the example of the TEG certifications for Irish demonstrate that a comprehensive suite of

qualifications can be run successfully both in the domestic and the international context. As efforts to improve the vitality of the six Celtic languages continue to progress, it is clear these certification initiatives are important for their uptake, status, and broader spread, thus placing these languages on an equal footing with major world languages.

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