



University for the Common Good

British Sign Language (BSL) Plan 2018 – 2024

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1. Introduction

1.1 About this plan

This is the British Sign Language (BSL) Plan for Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU), as required by the BSL (Scotland) Act. It sets out actions we will take over the period 2018-2024.

It follows the BSL National Plan, published 24 October 2017, which was developed through extensive engagement with Deaf and Deafblind BSL users and those who work with them.

Our plan is framed around the same long-term goals as the national plan, where these are relevant to the work of the University.

This plan supports our mission, vision and values. Glasgow Caledonian is the University for the Common Good and the plan supports our mission to make a positive difference to the communities we serve and this is at the heart of all we do, especially in our teaching and research on social innovation. Our innovative and award-winning work with communities around the world is underpinned by a shared commitment to the Common Good by students and staff at all levels.

Through this plan, GCU is committed to protecting and supporting BSL, including in its tactile form.

Central to this is our commitment to involving and engaging BSL users in developing our BSL plan, as well as continued engagement around implementing actions and providing feedback on progress. We will also contribute to the national progress report in 2020.

1.2 GCU BSL contacts

The GCU contacts for any questions or feedback in relation to the BSL plan are:

- Adrian Lui, Equality and Diversity Advisor, A.Lui@gcu.ac.uk
- Mel McKenna, Disability Adviser, Mel.McKenna@gcu.ac.uk

Additionally, BSL users can contact us via [contactSCOTLAND-BSL](#)

1.3 Where to find the BSL version of this plan

The BSL version of GCU's BSL plan can be accessed at the following link:
www.gcu.ac.uk/equality

2. Summary

2.1 Development of GCU's BSL Plan 2018-2024

The BSL (Scotland) Act says that BSL Local Plans should 'try to achieve consistency' with the BSL National Plan, and take into account guidance from Scottish Ministers. The GCU BSL Plan is aligned with this as it is based on a Further and Higher Education specific guidance document and template plan devised by the Scottish Government. The plan has been shaped through both internal and external engagement.

Internal engagement

Work on scoping the plan commenced internally in December 2017 when students and staff with experiences of, or interest in BSL were brought together for a discussion session, which identified areas of good practice as well as gaps for the plan to address. This was followed up in March 2018 with a briefing and information session for leads and managers of key GCU functions and services. This was facilitated by leads from the Disability and Equality and Diversity teams and supported by input from Deaf Action.

The early draft versions of the BSL plan were considered and approved by the University's Executive Board and Operations Group during May and June 2018. The final draft will then be presented to the University's People Committee, Senate and Court, and then published by October 2018.

External engagement

The University participated in a number of external discussions and events to inform the development of the plan. Attendance at Scottish Government BSL Plan Roadshows provided the opportunity to learn from BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 partners and other organisations from outwith the education sector.

The University was involved in Further and Higher Education-specific discussions informally through local networks, and formally through Advance HE (formerly Equality Challenge Unit). The University was involved in developing and running a joint BSL Plan Engagement Event with other colleges and universities from Glasgow and surrounding areas. This was held at Deaf Connections in Glasgow, and the themed discussion tables (based on the key stages of the student journey as well as employment issues) provided the opportunity for BSL users, parents and carers to provide direct feedback to colleges and universities to inform their plans and

supporting actions. This feedback has informed and consolidated the steps and actions in GCU's BSL Plan.

2.2 Summary of GCU's BSL Plan 2018-2024

GCU's BSL Plan has incorporated the feedback from internal and external engagement and is structured to follow the ten long-term goals of the BSL National Plan; the majority of the plan focuses on the core themes that relate to universities:

- Supporting BSL 'Across all our services'
- Supporting BSL as a 'Post-school education' provider.

The commitments can be broadly summarised as taking steps to make our information and services accessible to BSL users and to provide our staff with relevant information and development. In relation to **Supporting BSL 'Across all our services'**, we aim to ensure that we:

- Have accurate information on BSL users
- Improve information and services for students and prospective students who use BSL
- Promote the use of contactSCOTLAND-BSL
- Signpost staff who work with BSL users to appropriate training
- Take steps to ensure that our campuses and facilities are accessible to BSL users

In relation to **Supporting BSL as a 'Post-school education'** provider, we aim to ensure that we:

- Take action to support students and prospective students who use BSL
- Use specialist guidance to inform staff of their responsibilities towards BSL users
- Invite continuous feedback from people use BSL over the first 12-18 months of the plan
- Commit to reviewing and refreshing the plan to include more 'local' actions based on feedback after the national progress report in October 2020

The rest of the plan describes GCU's contribution to supporting other relevant long term goals, including 'Family Support, Early Learning and Childcare', 'School Education', 'Training, Work and Social Security', 'Health (including social care), Mental Health and Wellbeing', 'Culture and the Arts', 'Justice', and 'Democracy'.

3. Glasgow Caledonian University BSL Plan 2018-2024

1.1 Across all our services

GCU shares the long-term goal for all Scottish public services set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“Across the Scottish public sector, information and services will be accessible to BSL users”

By 2023 we will:

1.1.1 Analyse existing evidence we have about students, staff, prospective students and prospective staff who use BSL; identify and fill key information gaps so that we can establish baselines and measure our progress.

Steps	Timescale	Responsibility	Success measures
Scope existing mechanisms for collecting BSL user data (quantitative and qualitative) and implement required changes to systems and processes.	By 2019	Director of Strategy and Planning/Director of People	Clear overview established of BSL users in the GCU community.
Include data on BSL users routinely in relevant internal and external reports and use the data to inform equality impact assessments of decisions, services and activities.	By 2020	Director of Strategy and Planning/Director of People	Data on BSL users is used to inform planning and development of GCU services and activities.

By 2023 we will:			
1.1.2 Improve information and services for students and prospective students who use BSL, including making our website more accessible to BSL users.			
Steps	Timescale	Responsibility	Success measures
Identify the key information and services to be improved over the cycle of the first BSL plan.	By 2019	Director of Student Life/Head of Brand Management and Multimedia/Director of Marketing, Recruitment and Conversion	Evidence of BSL in our provision of information and services, and on our website and other media channels.
Secure resources and expertise to develop and deliver improvements to information and services, including our website	By 2020		
By 2023 we will:			
1.1.3 Promote the use of the Scottish Government’s nationally funded BSL online interpreting video relay services called ‘contactSCOTLAND-BSL’, which allows BSL users to contact public and third sector services and for these services to contact them.			
Steps	Timescale	Responsibility	Success measures
Use all internal channels such as Caledonian Connected, staff email, manager briefings and team meetings to cascade information on ‘contactSCOTLAND-BSL’ to all staff.	By 2019	Director of Student Life/Director of Communications	Evidence of staff aware of, and trained in use of ‘contactSCOTLAND-BSL’, supported by relevant technology.
Identify relevant frontline staff and provide tailored training sessions on using ‘contactSCOTLAND-BSL’.	By 2019	Director of People	

By 2023 we will:			
1.1.4 Signpost staff who work with BSL users to appropriate BSL awareness training, and enable them to take up such training.			
Steps	Timescale	Responsibility	Success measures
Source providers and materials in relation to BSL awareness.	By 2019	Director of People	Sessions procured and designed.
Develop calendar of training for relevant staff over the cycle of the BSL plan.	By 2019	Director of People	Sessions communicated to staff via managers.
Deliver training over the cycle of the BSL plan.	By 2023	Director of People	Proportionate numbers of staff trained in key teams.
By 2023 we will:			
1.1.5 Take steps to ensure that our campuses and facilities are accessible to BSL users.			
Steps	Timescale	Responsibility	Success measures
Embed BSL considerations in next review/update of Estates Strategy.	By 2023	Director of Estates	Evidence/feedback shows that BSL users can fully access our campuses/facilities.

1.2 Post-School Education

GCU shares the long-term goal for post- school education set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“BSL users will be able to maximise their potential at school, will be supported to transition to post-school education if they wish to do so, and will receive the support they need to do well in their chosen subject(s)”

By 2023 we will:

1.2.1 Take action to ensure that students and prospective students who use BSL are properly supported.

Steps	Timescale	Responsibility	Success measures
Provide accessible information about what BSL users can expect from GCU.	By 2020	Head of Brand Management and Multimedia	Our web pages are accessible to BSL users and there is visibility for users of BSL.
Provide access to key information within GCU campuses.	By 2020	Head of Brand Management and Multimedia	Our key information is accessible to BSL users.
Provide full access to open days for prospective students who use BSL.	By 2020	Director of Marketing, Recruitment and Conversion	Our open days consider and support the needs of BSL users.
Provide support throughout the student journey for students who use BSL (including completing application forms, interviews, applying for Disabled Students Allowance, SAAS etc., learning and teaching, placements, exams and graduation).	By 2020	All Directors and Deans, Academic Registrar	BSL users are supported throughout the student journey through accessible information, the use of Contact Scotland and having access to BSL interpreters where appropriate.

By 2023 we will:			
1.2.2 Take on board guidance produced by the SFC and others to ensure that across GCU, staff are aware of their responsibilities towards BSL users, and that students who use BSL know what to expect.			
Steps	Timescale	Responsibility	Success measures
Use all internal channels such as Caledonian Connected, staff email, manager briefings and team meetings to cascade information on guidance and good practice.	By 2019	Director of People/Director of Communications	Evidence of information circulated and briefings developed and sessions delivered to staff.
By 2023 we will:			
1.2.3 Invite continuous feedback from students/prospective students and staff who use BSL over the coming year/18 months after adopting this plan.			
Steps	Timescale	Responsibility	Success measures
Collect feedback through a survey, focus groups and 1 to 1 meetings to inform future activities.	By 2019	Equality and Diversity Advisor/Disability Adviser	Evidence of channels being used to collect feedback.
By 2023 we will:			
1.2.4 Commit to reviewing/refreshing this plan which includes more 'local' actions (based on that feedback) after the national progress report (due October 2020).			
Steps	Timescale	Responsibility	Success measures
Use feedback collected from BSL users and also consult with Directors/Deans/Heads to develop more 'local' actions.	By 2020	Equality and Diversity Advisor/Disability Adviser	Evidence of feedback being used to inform future versions of this plan.

Our contribution to other relevant long term goals will include:

1.3 Family Support, Early Learning and Childcare

GCU shares the long-term goal for all Scottish public services set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“The Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) approach will be fully embedded, with a D/deaf or Deafblind child and their family offered the right information and support at the right time to engage with BSL”

By 2023 we will:

1.3.1 Ensure that our childcare facilities on our Glasgow campus, and wider advice and support for staff/students who are parents, are accessible and welcoming to parents and children who use BSL.

Steps	Timescale	Responsibility	Success measures
Review process of nursery provision and scope the key stages of the process that require a BSL presence.	By 2019	Manager of GCU Nursery	Key information is provided to parents and children who are BSL users.

1.4 School Education

GCU shares the long-term goal for school education set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“Children and young people who use BSL will get the support they need at all stages of their learning, so that they can reach their full potential; parents who use BSL will have the same opportunities as other parents to be fully involved in their child’s education; and more pupils will be able to learn BSL at school”

By 2023 we will:

1.4.1 Ensure that our outreach work with schools and other partners, which includes School Connect, College Connect, the Caledonian Club, Routes for All and the Advanced Higher Hub, are accessible to children and young people who use BSL.

Steps	Timescale	Responsibility	Success measures
Review process of identifying and engaging with BSL users and their families across all outreach activities.	By 2019	Head of GCU Outreach/Head of Admissions	Feedback demonstrates that our community and engagement and outreach activities are inclusive of BSL users.
Develop action plan based on findings with actions embedded into the mainstream plans of each outreach project.	By 2020	Head of GCU Outreach/Head of Admissions	

1.5 Training, Work and Social Security

GCU shares the long-term goal for training, work and social security set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“BSL users will be supported to develop the skills they need to become valued members of the Scottish workforce, so that they can fulfil their potential, and improve Scotland’s economic performance. They will be provided with support to enable them to progress in their chosen career”

By 2023 we will:

1.5.1 Raise awareness of the UK Government’s ‘Access to Work’ scheme for students who use BSL towards the end of their course, so that they can benefit from the support it provides when they enter the world of work.

Steps	Timescale	Responsibility	Success measures
Review current provision and support in relation to Access to Work for students.	By 2019	Director of Student Life/Head of Careers	Feedback demonstrates that events and opportunities are accessible to BSL users.
Develop action plan based on findings with actions that are embedded into Careers Service plans and processes.	By 2020	Director of Student Life/Head of Careers	

By 2023 we will:

1.5.2 Take steps to ensure that People Services policies and processes in relation to the staff experience, including recruitment, development, progression and working arrangements are fully accessible to people who use BSL.

Steps	Timescale	Responsibility	Success measures
Review policies and processes in relation to key stages of the staff experience.	By 2019	Director of People	Feedback demonstrates that applicants and staff who are BSL users can access

Develop action plan based on findings with actions that are embedded into People Services plans and processes.			information and support.
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1.6 Health (including social care), Mental Health and Wellbeing

GCU shares the long-term goal for health, mental health and wellbeing set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“BSL users will have access to the information and services they need to live active, healthy lives, and to make informed choices at every stage of their lives”

By 2023 we will:

1.6.1 Take steps to ensure that GCU’s health/mental health services (including advice and counselling services) are fully accessible to students who use BSL.

Steps	Timescale	Responsibility	Success measures
Review current provision and support of mental health services and identify gaps in relation to BSL support.	By 2019	Director of Student Life	Feedback and evidence demonstrates that BSL users can fully benefit from services to support their health and wellbeing.
Include BSL provision in the development and implementation of the Student Mental Health Framework.	By 2020	Director of Student Life	

By 2023 we will:			
1.6.2 Take steps to ensure that GCU's staff support services, including Occupational Health, and our Employee Assistance Programme, are fully accessible to staff who use BSL.			
Steps	Timescale	Responsibility	Success measures
Review current provision and support of staff support services and identify gaps in relation to BSL support.	By 2019	Director of People	Feedback demonstrates that applicants and staff who are BSL users can access information and support.
Include BSL provision in the development and implementation of future staff wellbeing policies and provision.	By 2020	Director of People	
By 2023 we will:			
1.6.3 Take steps to ensure that classes and other facilities at the ARC are fully accessible to people who use BSL.			
Steps	Timescale	Responsibility	Success measures
Review current provision and support for BSL users in ARC classes and activities.	By 2019	Head of Campus Services	Feedback demonstrates that applicants and staff who are BSL users can access ARC classes and activities.
Include BSL provision in the planning of ARC classes and activities.	By 2020	Head of Campus Services	

1.7 Culture and the Arts

GCU shares the long-term goal for culture and the arts set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“BSL users will have full access to the cultural life of Scotland, an equal opportunity to enjoy and contribute to culture and the arts, and are encouraged to share BSL and Deaf Culture with the people of Scotland”

By 2023 we will:

1.7.1 Take action to ensure that extracurricular/recreational activities offered within GCU are fully accessible to students who use BSL.

Steps	Timescale	Responsibility	Success measures
Review current provision and support for BSL users in relation to student events and activities, including Fresher’s Week, clubs and societies.	By 2019	Director of Student Life/Chief Executive, Students’ Association	Feedback to demonstrate that intersectionality is recognised and groups/societies are accessible to all. E.g. LGBT BSL users are able to access the LGBT society.
Include BSL provision in the planning and delivery of student events and activities.	By 2020	Director of Student Life/Chief Executive, Students’ Association	

1.8 Justice

GCU shares the long-term goal for justice set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“BSL users will have fair and equal access to the civil, criminal and juvenile justice systems in Scotland”

By 2023 we will:

1.8.1 Take steps to ensure that our GCU Law Clinic, which provides free and confidential legal advice and assistance to individuals within the Greater Glasgow community who do not qualify for legal aid and cannot afford professional legal advice, is fully accessible to people to use BSL.

Steps	Timescale	Responsibility	Success measures
Review current provision and support for BSL users in relation to accessing information, advice and support at the GCU Law Clinic.	By 2019	Dean, Glasgow School for Business and Society	Evidence demonstrates that information and advice is accessible to members of the public who are BSL users.
Include BSL provision in the delivery of future GCU Law Clinic activities.	By 2020	Dean, Glasgow School for Business and Society	

1.9 Democracy

GCU shares the long-term goal for democracy set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“BSL users will be fully involved in democratic and public life in Scotland, as active and informed citizens, as voters, as elected politicians and as board members of our public bodies”

By 2023 we will:

1.9.1 Take steps to ensure that the policies and processes in relation to recruiting and supporting members of our University Court, which is our governing body, are fully accessible to people who use BSL.

Steps	Timescale	Responsibility	Success measures
Review current provision and support for BSL users in relation to recruitment of governors to University Court.	By 2019	University Secretary	Evidence of access to opportunities and services to BSL users.
Include BSL provision in the delivery of future recruitment of governors to University Court.	By 2020	University Secretary	

By 2023 we will:

1.9.2 Take steps to ensure that trade union members who are BSL users are provided with information and support

Steps	Timescale	Responsibility	Success measures
Review current provision and support for BSL users in relation to support and advice to Trade Union members.	By 2019	Chair of Combined Union Committee	Evidence of access to opportunities and services to BSL users.

Include BSL provision in the delivery of future support for Trade Union members.	By 2020	Chair of Combined Union Committee	
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4. What happens next?

- We very much welcome feedback on our BSL Plan from students, staff and other stakeholders, including organisations, community and voluntary groups, and members of the public. Whether you are part of a group, or are an individual, we are happy to for you to get in touch with us at and we will arrange a suitable time and place to collect your feedback.
- We will also be working in partnership with BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 Partners, including Deaf Action, and with BSL Communities to help ensure meaningful engagement and effective consultation.
- The final version of the plan will be published by October 2018 in English and BSL.
- Please contact Adrian Lui, Equality and Diversity Advisor at A.Lui@gcu.ac.uk or Mel McKenna, Disability Adviser, at Mel.McKenna@gcu.ac.uk if you want to continue to be involved as we further develop/implement the actions in our plan.