

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING
BY DEPUTY I. GARDINER OF ST. HELIER NORTH
QUESTION SUBMITTED ON MONDAY 3rd MARCH 2025
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON MONDAY 10th MARCH 2025**

Question

“Further to the adoption of the [Third Amendment](#) to the Common Strategic Policy (P.21/2024), in which it was stated that “we will provide adequate provisions and opportunities for lifelong learning, re-training and attractive flexible roles to ensure that age is not a barrier to older workers and to allow our ageing workforce to continue to participate in an evolving job market”, will the Minister advise what specific actions, if any, were undertaken to meet this commitment in 2024 and what plans, if any, exist for 2025?”

Answer

Since the Assembly endorsed the Common Strategic Policy (p.21/2024) I have progressed different policies that will contribute to the overall ambition for lifelong learning. These are set out below.

Skills Jersey has now completed a comprehensive piece of analysis working alongside industry to identify where there are significant sector skills gaps. The insights from this work, to be published in the next quarter, will inform future investment in skills training to address these gaps.

The Skills Development Scheme will act as the vehicle that will commission training going forward. Since its official relaunch in the summer of 2024 the scheme has financially supported training in the following areas:

- technological upskilling to improve productivity and digitalisation.
- electric/hybrid motor vehicle maintenance
- heat pump design and installation

A priority area for 2025 will be the review of the financial arrangements to support apprenticeships. This pathway is already associated with high levels of continued employment following completion. My ambition is to introduce changes that will enable the expansion of the current apprenticeship offer in Jersey.

In Higher Education the final stages of legislative drafting are in progress to introduce significant changes to the financial support provided to those who study through distance learning. This will create parity of funding across all modes of study and may provide an easier route to retraining for some who may already be balancing work and family commitments. The changes are intended to take effect in 2025 with students able to apply for financial support as soon as the legislative changes come into effect.

In addition, I have introduced a policy of inflation protection to income thresholds. Income thresholds determine the amount of grant that is awarded to students. This change will ensure that the value of grants is maintained in line with economic conditions.

The eligibility criteria for the Jersey Bursary have also been widened. The Jersey Bursary provides financial support to individuals who wish to study at post-graduate level where study at that level is not mandatory to obtain a professional qualification.

The changes, which are now in effect, include:

- Part time and distance learning courses are now eligible for consideration

- The removal of the requirement to hold a minimum of a 2:1 degree
- Removal of the requirement to provide 2 academic references. Only one reference is now needed, and it does not need to come from an academic source

These changes aim to support lifelong learning, particularly for mature learners who often have commitments such as employment or caring responsibilities. In such cases, leaving Jersey for an extended period or enrolling on a full-time course is not always feasible. We are making it easier for individuals to access flexible study options that can be undertaken while living in Jersey and that enable learners to balance their study with other responsibilities.

Removing the requirement for two academic references makes it easier for mature learners, who may have been out of education for many years and no longer have a relationship with their former educators, to meet the application requirements for the Jersey Bursary. This will help individuals pursue opportunities to retrain or advance their education to higher levels.