

Lifelong Vocational Learning in Jersey: Current State and Key Challenges

1. Adequacy of Lifelong Vocational Learning Opportunities in Jersey

Jersey's lifelong vocational learning landscape features notable strengths, particularly in the form of robust partnerships between employers and providers within construction and health & social care sectors. Apprenticeships at Level 2 and Level 3 are built on effective models, supported by high-quality teaching teams in certain vocational departments. Despite these positives, the opportunities available for lifelong vocational learning in Jersey are currently insufficient. This inadequacy is especially pronounced given the persistent skill shortages across the island, affecting construction, engineering, and various technical disciplines. The principal challenges lie in the limited provision of higher-level courses on the island and a lack of structured opportunities for progression beyond degree level.

2. Effectiveness of Funding for Lifelong Vocational Learning

Financial support mechanisms are in place for students undertaking off-island university studies, and there is clear government recognition of the importance of technical education. Nonetheless, the distribution of funding remains inconsistent across different vocational pathways. Apprenticeship funding, in particular, falls significantly below the actual costs involved in training, creating obstacles for both learners and providers. Furthermore, inadequate funding for Level 2 and Level 3 programmes hinders progression into higher education, thereby limiting long-term skill development within the local workforce.

3. Resourcing and Outcomes of Existing Vocational Learning Programmes

Where employer partnerships are well-structured, vocational programmes tend to deliver strong results, including high employment rates among graduates. Highlands College, working in collaboration with key industry bodies, exemplifies active engagement and support. Dedicated tutors play a crucial role in facilitating positive learner experiences. Despite these achievements, the availability of higher-level

apprenticeships on the island remains limited, and progression frameworks are often fragmented, impeding seamless advancement for learners.

4. Accessibility and Inclusion of Lifelong Vocational Learning

Inclusive teaching practices are evident in Jersey's vocational education, with personalised assistance provided for learners facing challenges such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, or ADHD. Investments in adaptive technologies further support accessibility. However, the overall experience is inconsistent; some buildings remain outdated and inaccessible, and the provision of support for neurodivergent learners varies. Financial barriers continue to restrict participation for individuals from low-income families, undermining efforts to make vocational learning universally accessible.

5. Alignment of Lifelong Learning with Needs Across the Life Course

Vocational learning opportunities in Jersey are, in principle, available to individuals of all ages. Yet, the structure does not adequately support those seeking career transitions, mid-career reskilling, or advancement beyond degree level. Encouragingly, local providers are showing an increasing willingness to expand adult learning options, and there are strong entry-level pathways available. Despite this, urgent action is needed to address skills gaps in trades, engineering, digital capabilities, and workload management.

6. Alignment with Labour Market and Employer Needs

Current vocational pathways are not fully aligned with the demands of key sectors such as construction, engineering, digital, renewable energy, and technical trades. While there are successful examples, such as established trade apprenticeships and effective employer engagement models, the overall responsiveness of the system remains slow. Recent collaborative efforts to introduce training in heat pump and low-carbon heating technologies represent a positive step towards better alignment with evolving labour market needs.

Conclusion

Jersey possesses areas of excellence in lifelong vocational learning, particularly where employer partnerships and dedicated teaching teams support successful apprenticeship models. Nonetheless, the system as a whole is under-resourced, slow to

adapt, unevenly funded, and lacks sufficient routes for higher-level progression. Progress towards a future-ready skills ecosystem will require the development of a fully funded on-island vocational progression pathway, enhanced accessibility and inclusivity, a sustainable apprenticeship funding model, rapid curriculum updates in green technologies and digital skills, and modernised learning facilities.