

# The Jersey Chamber of Commerce

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## Response to the request from the Education & Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel, for feedback on the Student Finance Proposals.

Dear Deputy Macon,

In order to provide your committee with feedback from the Jersey Chamber of Commerce, regarding the Student Finance Proposals as outlined in the 2018 Jersey Budget, a survey was sent to our Members. There were 161 participants and below is a summary of those responses, which we hope will help with your scrutiny review.

### Summary:

- 61% of respondents identified themselves as parents, 35% workers.
- Prior to the university funding proposals, 70% of respondents were already considering the possibility of going to university. However, with the possibility of additional finance available that percentage did not increase. In fact, 49% (almost half) of respondents said the prospect of the student finance would not affect their decision to seek further education.
- Cost was overwhelmingly highlighted as being the main barrier when considering university, with 75% of those taking part in the survey choosing this option over other barriers, such as qualifications, concerns about leaving the island, caring for a family member or child, or existing employment.
- There was almost a 50/50 split from respondents as to whether they had concerns regarding the finance proposals. Reference to these concerns is made later in this reply.

In response to your question, *'Do you think that the proposed model of student financing meets the needs of young people and their families in Jersey and if so why?'*

Our survey highlighted that 75% of respondents were in favour of the funding proposals laid out in the 2018 budget. However, this result must be taken in the context that almost two-thirds of respondents were parents and therefore, further education finance could at some point in their child's future be an important, and potentially costly consideration for them. Therefore, one could suggest that of course, those respondents were more likely to be in favour of such a proposal.

The cost of going to university is undoubtedly a primary consideration for young people and their families and 75% of our respondents highlighted finances as being the biggest obstacle. However, 70% of respondents said they were already considering the possibility of going to university prior to the funding proposals and almost half said the prospect of the student finance would not affect their decision to seek further education.

Anecdotal comments in favour tended to be that the funding would have a positive impact on their families and that choices as to which child to send to university, or the need for re-mortgaging would no longer be a consideration if the student finance proposals went ahead.

There were, however, concerns raised from some respondents, such as whether taxes would rise as a direct result and whether the money was being put to the best use.

Another concern was that the funding would make it 'free' to go to university, which they felt may reduce a level of commitment and that there was the possibility a student could drop out without any consequences of their actions.

In response to your question, *'What changes, if any, would you like to see to the proposed model that would greater assist young people in achieving their ambitions?'*

63% of respondents suggested companies in Jersey should be encouraged to offer more graduate schemes and jobs. Chamber would welcome scrutiny considering ways that local businesses could be encouraged to offer more schemes specifically for graduates, in order for the island to utilise skills gained from a university education.

Whilst your consultation was specifically regarding the funding mechanism, some respondents felt there was a lack of local apprenticeship, graduate and degree schemes in Jersey. Areas that may be worthy of consideration when looking at the proposal is whether there would be a benefit in:

- Providing more local educational and vocational opportunities at 18 plus on Island.
- Encouraging young people outside of Jersey to study in Jersey and whether those overseas fees could raise funding for educational programmes and a greater range of degrees on offer in Jersey.
- Provide a weighted subsidy for local courses/programmes which may encourage uptake locally and would assist with keeping talent on the Island and reduce the financial burden to individuals and families.

In conclusion, it would appear that the majority of respondents to our survey, of which 61% were parents, were in favour of the proposals. We can infer from this that the parents who responded to the survey did feel that the model met their own current or likely needs to finance their children's tertiary education.

With kind regards,

**Jersey Chamber of Commerce  
Chamber Connection Committee.**