

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE BY THE
CONNÉTABLE OF ST. LAWRENCE**

ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 20th JANUARY 2009

Question

For the years 2003 to 2008 inclusive, would the Minister inform members –

- (a) the total cost of higher education courses to the Department for each year?

Answer

The total cost of higher education courses to the Department for each year 2003 – 2008 is detailed below

Year	Cost
2003	£7,26M*
2004	£8.83M*
2005	£9.58M*
2006	£9.45M*
2007	£9.08M
2008	Year end accounts not yet available

** Please note until towards the end of 2006 student grants included payments to low-income students following courses of study at Highlands College. Funding for this was transferred to Social Security as an aspect of Low Income Support.*

Question

- (b) the number of undergraduate withdrawals, if any?
(c) the cost to the Department for those undergraduate withdrawals?

Answer

- (b) & (c) the number of undergraduate withdrawals, the cost to the Department for those undergraduate withdrawals and the sums recovered from those who did not withdraw due to ill-health is detailed below.

Students not completing Higher Education Programmes

Reasons for leaving

Year	Ill Health	Amount paid	Withdrawn	Amount paid	Amount refunded
2003/2004			17	£104,625	£17,759
2004/2005	2	£20,139	18	£121,879	£25,718
2005/2006	3	£60,741	23	£183,857	£32,268
2006/2007	13	£139,934	28	£152,333	£28,195
2007/2008	6	£97,115	42	£303,725	£51,773

Question

- (d) what the current policy is for reclaiming monies owed by those undergraduates?

Answer

Under the Current arrangements for the financial support of students, those who withdraw from a course due to ill health are not required to reimburse grants paid to them if satisfactory evidence is provided from both the institute and a doctor.

If a student fails or withdraws for non-health reasons however, there is a financial penalty. A student in receipt of a maintenance award will have to repay the unexpended portion of the award for the term in which he/she left. The Department will also require a repayment of the tuition fees for the previous term that had been paid by the Department.

In accordance with the signed declaration on the application form, the contributors and the student are jointly liable to repay an award in the event of a repayment being requested by the Department.

When considering the above figures it is important to bear in mind, that middle and high earning families obtain little by way of financial support for university study as financial assistance is designed to help those who would otherwise be unable to access higher education. In many instances therefore, students and their families who may be asked to refund grants are liable to experience the greatest difficulty in making repayments.

Question

(e) whether that policy will be reviewed?

Answer

Expenditure on student grants has to be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure value for money from the UK and a fair distribution of a limited resource among local students, I am pleased that the overall student drop-out rate for Jersey students is below ten percent, compared to about 15% in the UK and I have no plans to review the overall policy for student grants at this time. I will however, be seeking further information on the reasons behind the apparent recent increase in withdrawals and into the effectiveness of our mechanisms for recovering States investment in students who do not complete their programmes of study.