

14th January 2026

Dear Deputy Curtis,

Thank you for your letter dated 3rd December 2025.

Please find below Highlands College and University College Jersey's formal response to the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel review of Lifelong Learning.

1. Adequacy of opportunities for lifelong vocational learning in Jersey:

Many programmes in lifelong learning do not attract statutory funding and therefore our offer reflects government priorities and the funding available to support those priorities.

For example, between 450 and 500 adult learners enrol annually on professional courses to upskill and meet employer needs. While staffing is funded, teaching and delivery costs are not, requiring us to charge employers and individuals. In England, adult students can apply for Advanced Learner Loans for Level 3 to 6 qualifications. Level 2 qualifications (GCSE equivalent) can be accessed via the Adult Skills Fund designed for adults on lower incomes in England. In Scotland, adult training is funded by the Scottish Funding Council and Skills Development Scotland. Employers there cover apprenticeship wages, but not the training cost.

Student satisfaction rates remain in the 90s at Highlands College, but access is necessarily limited by cost. Overall satisfaction stands at 94%, while student satisfaction with Teaching and Learning across the college remains consistent at 92%.

For 16–19-year-olds, we offer programmes which match island employment sectors, but the estate and resources to support learning are outdated. They do not provide industry-standard environments as recommended in the Martin Doel "Actionable Agenda" (2022) and fail to inspire or motivate people to commit to a vocational educational pathway.

Ideally, students should access A-Levels and vocational pathways, but while all other 6th forms are selective and attract fees, this is not currently an option. The best performing Further Education Colleges in the U.K. are often tertiary, enabling access to academic and vocational pathways in one institution. We do offer a Design Engineer Construct course post-16 and jointly employ the award-winning teacher with Hautlieu School. In fact, we partner with most schools and colleges in some form or another, but it is not system-led, rather it driven by the local leadership of the institution.

Post-19 learners face significant barriers, including lack of funding for career changes and Access to Higher Education courses. For example, a parent wishing to study Access to Higher Education must demonstrate a commitment to finding work, even though an Access course can be full-time. This means a parent of working age can find improving their education, beyond their financial means.



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If you have a prior degree, even if funded by another jurisdiction, you cannot access Student Finance. We have excellent applicants to degree-level study every year who cannot switch careers, and this has, and will impact, the future sustainability of some degrees on island. The grant funding via Student Finance is generous, but not flexible enough to meet the needs of career switchers. I would suggest that further consideration be given to allowing access to Student Finance for career switches in critical shortage areas like social work.

Parents who move to Jersey to work cannot access funded post-16 education under current regulations, unless they are transferring from Year 11 at a local secondary school. They must appeal to the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, if their young person wants to study. This was to mitigate the risk of educational tourism but could present a barrier to skilled workers settling in Jersey.

2. Effectiveness of funding for lifelong vocational learning:

The College has an annual income target to balance the budget. The income target for 2025 was £3,841,000.00 with £3,371,000.00 from course fee income. We rent space out to help balance the budget. This provides space for the Institute of Law. We did house JICAS but the uncertainty over space allocation meant they moved to an alternative location. Our own UCJ degree students have one dedicated floor and no lecture theatre.

Apprenticeships receive a maximum grant of £1,800 per apprentice, while actual costs are on average £4630.00. The government funding rates for apprenticeships are higher in England, but this is funded via a Levy on large employers. Most of our employers are small and micro businesses so the same system would not work.

There is no statutory entitlement for vocational education post-16. The NASEN review (2021) recommended Raising the Participation Age for Education, but this has not been progressed.

Currently, the Education (Jersey) Law states: -

“Duty of Minister with respect to higher and vocational education

The Minister shall facilitate attendance, in Jersey or elsewhere, by any person who has not previously undertaken a course of higher or vocational education, on such a course of higher or vocational education as is appropriate to the person’s abilities and aptitudes.”

The Minister may charge a fee for – (a) the provision of education for persons over compulsory school age; and (b) making facilities available for the purposes of continuing education.” (1999)

There is demand for adult literacy and numeracy programmes, for parents and employers, but there is no entitlement to funding, or access, so we cannot offer these programmes free of charge.

The current Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning has tasked government officers with developing a more sustained approach to access, equality of opportunity and funding for apprenticeships. This is a welcome step forward.



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3. Resourcing and quality of outcomes:

Despite resource constraints, Highlands College achieves excellent results, and partnerships are outstanding.

The college continues to strengthen its industry partnerships year on year. The breadth of its provision is carefully planned, informed by analysis of data, including local economic and social contexts: Apprenticeship achievement rates are 92%, and overall progression to employment or higher education is 95%, verified through a Purlos Artificial Intelligence tracking system.

However, facilities are outdated, limiting delivery of modern vocational programmes like Performing Arts in a converted woodwork workshop, health and social care with no simulation labs, and animal management in a converted classroom housing small animals (we pay JSPCA to access their facilities and animals).

In comparison, UK colleges deliver robotics and have simulated work environments like hospital wards.

4. Accessibility and inclusivity:

Barriers exist for older adults, parents, and those with disabilities. Adults pay for most courses, and there is no additional funding for English and Mathematics GCSE re-takes for all learners, including those with severe learning difficulties. We cannot meet demand from the Prison service, or from organisations like Les Amis.

Physical access to our estate is a significant constraint. Across 11 buildings:

- Only 4 have fully compliant accessible lifts
- Only 4 have disabled-accessible toilets

This means we cannot ensure equal access to classrooms, workshops, or student support services. Each year, students transitioning from fully accessible secondary schools face reduced access at Highlands. If a mobility-impaired student has an accident outside their course, when they return to class in the Media or Art blocks, where buildings were condemned in the 1990s — we must re-timetable entire programmes, simply to maintain access.

While SEND funding has improved in schools as well as here at the College, there is no equivalent high-needs funding for post-16 learners at Highlands.

Without investment in an accessible estate and equitable funding for adult and high-needs learners, lifelong vocational learning in Jersey cannot fully meet community needs or the ambitions set for the island's future workforce.

5. Meeting needs across life stages and addressing gaps:

Current provision does not fully meet lifelong learning needs. Gaps exist in green technology, healthcare, marine, and short digital courses. We are currently in discussions with Jersey Electricity to further augment our low carbon technical training, but this will require investment in the workshops.



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The ageing demographic and falling school rolls demonstrate an urgent need to invest in Lifelong Learning.

The PWC report (2019) on upskilling forecast that 30% of jobs were at risk due to automation and 27,000 of those jobs were in finance. If we do not upskill our workers, we risk the social and economic wellbeing of the island. Certainly, this is not solely the responsibility of the Government; it lies with sector leaders as well, still Highlands College could be, and should be part of the solution. We want people to work longer and remain productive and healthy, upskilling and retrain, as well as Adult and Community Education, attempt to protect islanders economically and boost their wellbeing.

The recent “Investing in Jersey” programme demonstrates a growing commitment in this area where we invest in infrastructure like a higher and technical college to grow local talent and stimulate the economy.

There are further opportunities for Statistics Jersey, Economy and CYPES to develop Labour Market Intelligence. We have the “green roots” of this in analysis of sector vacancies and qualification gaps, plus “soft data” like feedback from representative employer boards. Some jurisdictions have developed portals which present data on economic inactivity; earnings by sector; demographics; occupation types; disability employment rates and use this to identify trends and forecast future needs. They then commission Further Education providers to deliver training for needs now and into the future.

Highlands and UCJ was commissioned, after the pandemic, to deliver “fiscal stimulus” and “social recovery” programmes which attracted over 1000 adults. All outputs were quality assured and impact assessed by government.

6. Responsiveness to labour market and emerging sectors:

Highlands demonstrates a proactive approach to ensuring the curriculum intent of programmes is inclusive, robust, and meets both community and island skills priorities and needs.

There have been over 17 new curriculum developments. These include new degrees and apprenticeships, as well as the redesign of the Jersey progression Qualification (JPQ) in 12 subject pathways. This demonstrates the College’s responsiveness.

Learning programmes are expertly designed in collaboration with employers and stakeholders, ensuring that students gain the knowledge, skills, and understanding needed for successful progression into further or higher education and/or sustained employment (95% progression into employment or Higher Education Purpos).

However, without statutory funding and infrastructure investment, we cannot sustain responsiveness. International best practice (e.g., Norway, Germany) values vocational learning highly, it has the same status as studying medicine and is seen as an equal and valued pathway alternative to A-Levels. It must be recognised that Germany for example, has a fully progressive taxation system, starting at 14% and rising to 45%. Thus, the ability to invest in education and training is greater.



Significant investment and an agreed entitlement for vocational education are essential to deliver government ambitions and economic growth.

The current Labour Government has just published a White Paper for Education and Skills (2025). It details multi-million-pound investment in Further Education to drive up economic outcomes and drive down joblessness and NEET numbers. In Jersey, we have a NEET programme, funded via Skills Jersey, and Highlands College has assessed their part of the scheme to have positive measurable outcomes.

Conclusion:

Highlands College and University College Jersey deliver 90% of vocational and technical learning on the island, serving diverse learners across all ages, from all socio and economic backgrounds.

I suggest that the government works with education and training providers to develop a socio-economic impact framework to assess the return on investment for the activities it expects institutions to deliver. This could be informed by the Association of Colleges 2025 framework: -

- Financial and economic value
- Skills development and employer alignment
- Community and social regeneration
- Learner impact and social mobility
- Organisational learning and capacity building
- Sustainability

A statutory entitlement for adults, alongside investment into our infrastructure, would support Jersey in meeting future skills needs. The return on investment would be life changing for individuals and key to the prosperity of Jersey.

I would like to thank you and your panel for conducting this review into Lifelong Learning in Jersey.

Yours sincerely,



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