

2.12 Deputy K.C. Lewis of St. Saviour of the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture regarding negotiations with the U.K. authorities to have Jersey students regarded as ‘home students’ rather than students from ‘overseas dependencies’:

Further to news that student fees in the United Kingdom may go up to £9,000 a year, will the Minister update Members regarding negotiations with United Kingdom authorities to have Jersey students regarded as home students rather than students from overseas dependencies?

The Deputy of St. Ouen (The Minister for Education, Sport & Culture):

I would ask that Deputy Green acts as rapporteur.

The Bailiff:

Yes, Assistant Minister.

Deputy A.K.F. Green of St. Helier (The Assistant Minister for Education, Sport & Culture - rapporteur):

We do not know yet what affect the U.K. proposals will have on Jersey students. We are in contact with our colleagues in the Isle of Man and Guernsey who find themselves in a similar position. We will be meeting with the relevant U.K. officials and representatives at the end of this month. As the Deputy inferred, Jersey students are currently regarded as neither home nor overseas, because we are neither British overseas territory nor are we E.U. (European Union) members. I think we are sometimes regarded as a Peculiar of the Crown. We negotiate our agreements directly with U.K. universities and U.K. Government agencies. The U.K. Government policy as it stands is that no U.K. university should obtain more or less by admitting an Island student than they would obtain from a U.K. student following the identical course.

2.12.1 Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I think we are all aware of the student unrest in the U.K. at this time. There is a disparity between a U.K. student, an overseas student and a Jersey student. Will the Assistant Minister inform Members how much a U.K. student would pay and the equivalent that a Jersey student would pay? Thank you.

Deputy A.K.F. Green:

Under the current arrangement a U.K. student would pay a maximum of £3,000 and under the 2012 proposed arrangement a U.K. student would pay a maximum of £9,000. A Jersey student currently will pay between £1,500 and £10,500. We do not know what the effect of the government changes will be beyond that. So currently they pay between £1,500 and £10,500. Suffice to say that the Jersey authorities are being charged £6,500 to £23,500 for each course.

2.12.2 Senator S.C. Ferguson:

Given that there has been a change in government in the U.K. and given that students from such places as the Cayman Islands are paying the U.K. rates, will the Assistant Minister give us the assurances that the 3 dependent territories will fight their corner rather harder on this particular aspect of fees?

Deputy A.K.F. Green:

Absolutely. Our aim is to get the best deal possible for students and we will work very closely with our colleagues in the other Crown Dependencies to achieve this.

2.12.3 Senator S.C. Ferguson:

A supplementary. Given that students from such places as the Cayman Islands are paying the U.K. rates and are not paying an overseas rate or a Jersey rate, will the Assistant Minister make sure that these sorts of disparities are considered?

Deputy A.K.F. Green:

I cannot answer for the U.K. Government policy, but I will fight our corner.

2.12.4 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Would the Assistant Minister confirm whether or not the department is actively looking at alternatives, like European universities and the Open University?

Deputy A.K.F. Green:

We always have an open mind and we do currently fund people not only to U.K., but European, Australian and American universities.

2.12.5 The Deputy of Grouville:

Would the Assistant Minister not say that this raises some constitutional issues, whereby a Crown Dependency is discriminated against and whereby an overseas territory, for want of a better word, is not?

Deputy A.K.F. Green:

I would agree that it does raise some issues that we are treated differently and that we are not treated as an ordinary overseas dependency. However, that is not something that we have total control over. It is set by the U.K. Government. That said, we will fight our corner to get the best deal we possibly can and try and get recognition the same as other U.K. overseas territories.

The Bailiff:

Very well. We come to the next question.