

PRESS RELEASE

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GOVERNMENT'S HUGE INVESTMENT IN THE FUTURE

As excitement grows in the run-up to the opening of Gibraltar's own university, HM Government of Gibraltar has released figures which show the huge number of our students currently being sponsored to study in UK. Thanks to Gibraltar's increasingly strong finances, over nearly 900 students are now being funded to study an enormous number of courses in universities across the UK – indeed, some are also being sponsored to study in Malta, Ireland, Canada and in the USA. In almost every case, all tuition fees and a full maintenance grant, including travel costs, are being paid by the Government, unlike in UK where students and their families are usually required to borrow up to £9000 per year to cover these costs. Many British graduates are therefore saddled with large debts before their working lives have even begun.

The record number of students is due to the continuation of our policy introduced in 1988 to fund all students who obtained a place at university. The numbers have been bolstered by this administration of non-discretionary scholarships for postgraduate degrees. Moreover, the growth in numbers has not been affected by the huge increase in tuition fees in the past three years in the UK. We are able to fund this without any problems.

A particularly striking feature of Gibraltar's statistics is that there are currently over 100 students being sponsored to study on post-graduate courses. These courses cover an enormous range of subjects from Theology to Criminology and from Psychology to Fashion.

Minister for Education, the Hon Gilbert Licudi QC said, "Gibraltar is one of very few places in Europe where it is possible for a student to study for his/her first degree and then go on to study at postgraduate level – all at negligible or no cost to the students themselves. In our community of 30,000 people, it is quite remarkable that around 900 students are now on university courses. President John F Kennedy once said, 'Let us think of education as the means of developing our greatest abilities, because in each of us there is a private hope and dream which, fulfilled, can be translated into benefit for everyone and greater strength for our nation.' He was right: the Gibraltar Government's investment in the future is well worth every penny."