



## Foreign Affairs Committee

Overseas Territories Sub-Committee

From the Chair  
**Alicia Kearns MP**

The Rt Hon Lord Cameron  
Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs  
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office  
SW1A 2AH

The Rt Hon Gillian Keegan MP  
Secretary of State for Education  
Department for Education  
SW1p 3BT

*[by email]*

23 May 2024

Dear Foreign Secretary and Education Secretary,

### **Support for students in the Overseas Territories**

Thank you for the Government's participation in our recent oral evidence session on the support for Overseas Territory students and for the written evidence submitted. We also heard in private from Overseas Territories students and received a number of submissions of private and public written evidence. Due to the impending Dissolution of Parliament, we will not now be able to conclude this inquiry. Therefore, we thought it would be helpful to share some of the themes emerging as the respective departments plan future engagement, and to aid ongoing Parliamentary scrutiny of this issue.

1. We understand that there is still confusion in Overseas Territory governments as to how they might best make direct contact with relevant DFE officials and what support they can expect. The Minister's commitment to confirm the best mechanism for engagement would likely improve this.
2. We heard that it is still difficult for Overseas Territory students and their parents to navigate the rules and regulations regarding their study in the UK and support for which they may be eligible. There were calls for the Government to better present this information to them with clear lines of communication for further clarification.
3. We heard repeatedly that there are frequent misunderstandings by UK universities on the immigration and eligibility status of Overseas Territory students. There were calls for the Government to do more in raising awareness amongst universities.
4. In absence of evidence that there is a significant problem of students from the Falklands failing to meet the required standards of English ahead of studying in the UK, there is consensus that invigilated exams in Chile are not necessary.
5. Evidence received suggests that the funding for education in St Helena, and the support offered to students from the island wishing to continue to tertiary education, is insufficient given local



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salaries and high transport costs. There were calls for the Government to step up its support for teaching staff on the island as well as extending more financial support to students wishing to study in the UK.

I hope this summary is helpful as you work across Whitehall to provide continued support to students in Overseas Territories seeking to study in the UK.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alicia Kearns".

**ALICIA KEARNS**