

French courses are less expensive than those in UK

Education push link to Caen alternative

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MORE students could choose to study abroad next year after the Education Department strengthened its links with a French university.

The department has been working with Caen University in Normandy to encourage more Islanders to study there in future.

At present, very few Jersey students attend university outside the UK, but Education says that Caen University, which offers a year-long French language course for international students before they begin their degree, could be a 'realistic, viable alternative' to the UK for some students.

A report published by Education last year revealed that the number of students going to UK universities was falling, partly because they could not afford the fees. The average cost of a three-year UK university course, including accommodation and maintenance fees, is about £60,000.

In comparison, the total fees for a pre-degree language year at Caen University are just under 3,000 euros. For degree courses after that, students pay about 500 euros for their registration fee and health insurance, and tuition is free.

Education chief officer Justin Donovan said: 'Potentially this is an exciting development. It makes sense to look to our closest neighbour and help our students find another way to continue their education.'

'While this might not be a solution for every young person, it is certainly an open door for some, and we will do everything we can to provide the support our students need to make it a reality.'

Next month staff from the university are due to meet Island students and their parents to explain more about studying in Caen. It is also hoped that the event will include an online link to English-speaking students already studying at the university.



Initially the department will encourage students studying A-level French or those who have a high grade at GCSE to consider applying. Under the scheme, students can live with host families or in campus accommodation.

Last month Treasury Minister Alan Maclean said that Island banks were reluctant to lend to people wanting to study outside Jersey, and that there were no government plans to introduce a student loan scheme.

Education Minister Rod Bryans said: 'Alongside this Caen development, work is continuing to explore all options to support our students to get to university.'

■ Caen University has been working with Education Department officials to help Jersey students