

AMY'S SNAPPING INTO BRIGHTER FUTURE– THANKS TO EDUCATION MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE

Cash boost helps Hertfordshire student snap into photography career

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Just got your GCSE results? Are you thinking about leaving full-time education and not sure what to do next?

Help is at hand from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), which gives students aged 16-19 an Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) of up to £30 a week to take part in a learning programme or course.

If you're about to leave compulsory education, EMA could be for you. It can help with the costs of books, travel, equipment or anything else you need to continue learning, and it's paid straight into your bank account, not to your parents or your college.

The hardest-working students can also be in line for further cash bonuses at Christmas and certain other times of the year.

18-year-old student Amy from Letchworth, Hertfordshire is on course to qualify in her preferred job as a photographer thanks to help from the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA).

Amy decided to take the BTEC course in Media Production at North Hertfordshire College because she has always been interested in photography. The creative student spends her spare time taking pictures of local bands and has even set up a web page on Myspace with examples of her photography. www.myspace.com/amyboonphotography

After taking a year out, working as a kitchen assistant, Amy decided to go to college and has been helped by the EMA with costs of getting to and from college.

She said:

“After working full time in a job which I didn’t want as a future career, I decided to go to college and study something that interested me. I’ve always loved photography-in particular taking pictures of bands and adding to my website on Myspace.

“I don’t know for certain if it’s what I want to do forever but I really enjoy it and I’m loving the course. I know I’m now moving in the right direction! It’s been really helpful having the EMA to help with travel costs. I don’t think it would have been possible to do this do this course without the extra help.

“If I didn’t have the extra help I’d still have to work full time and I wouldn’t get the opportunities and skills that I’ve got out of this course. It’s strange to think how different things would be without it!”

Liam Sammon, Area Director for the LSC in Hertfordshire said: “There is growing evidence to show that EMA is making a real difference to the prospects of young people who might otherwise have dropped out of full-time education.

“The regular income that EMA offers gives them independence to make real choices about their future education, training and career prospects.

“Amy is a great example of how staying in learning, gaining higher level skills and qualifications provides a foundation for a more successful and fulfilling future.”

ENDS

EMA

What are the key features of EMA?

- Weekly payment bands of £30, £20 and £10 per week, depending on household income.
- Intermittent bonus payments depending on the programme of learning.
- Available for both academic and vocational study, up to level 3, which can include courses such as basic skills GCSE retakes, GNVQs, NVQs, as well as AS and A2s.
- No other household benefits are affected.
- Young people can still have a part-time job.

Who is eligible?

- Young people are eligible to receive or to continue receiving EMA in the EMA year 2008/09 providing:
 - They will already be 16, 17, 18 or 19 on the 1st September 2008;
 - From households where the combined family income is less than 30,810
 - They are participating in full-time further education (as defined in EMA guidance) up to and including Level 3, or LSC funded e2e or a Programme led Apprenticeship

For further details, please contact 0800 121 8989 (some mobile operators may charge for calls made to this number) or visit www.direct.gov.uk/ema. Last year, EMA helped more than 500,000 young people continue in education and training.

LSC

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for planning and funding high-quality vocational education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to world-class standards. Our vision is that by 2010, young people and adults in England have the knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. Established in 2001, we work nationally, regionally and locally from a network of offices across the country.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

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