

STAYING ON IN EDUCATION CAN HELP YOU GO FAR

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As students across the South West collect their GCSE results today [Thursday 27 August] and make decisions about their future, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) is reminding young people about the financial and career benefits of staying in education.

Many of the young people making decisions about their future will be facing financial pressures, but in today's tough market the chance to continue their studies and earn at the same time could offer significant benefits.

Young people who qualify for the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), funded by the LSC, can claim up to £30 a week while they study.

Just how far £30 a week can go and just what a difference it can make when it comes to staying in education is something a growing number of young people are finding out.

Malcolm Gillespie, LSC Regional Director for the South West said: "Being able to stay on in education is all the more valuable at a time when the job market is particularly challenging. The whole point of EMA is that it helps young people continue their learning. Each student's needs will vary but there's no doubt that up to £120 a month can make the difference in helping young people fulfil their potential."

How recipients spend the money is up to them. Course books, food and contributions to household bills are, of course, on the list. The money can be used to cover travel to courses that might otherwise be beyond reach.

The LSC is committed to providing practical help for young people. Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) offers up to £30 a week towards their continuing education for those eligible aged 16-18, dependent on household income. EMA is paid directly into the student's bank account and additional bonuses are also available for students who do well and meet targets set by their teacher, tutor or provider.

Applying is easy. Just call 0800 121 89889 or visit www.direct.gov.uk/ema

ENDS

Note to Editors

LSC

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for ensuring the availability of high-quality 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 young people and adults in England have knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. We work nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers.

All public enquiries regarding EMA please contact: 0800 121 8989 (some mobile operators may charge for calls made to this number) or visit www.direct.gov.uk/ema.

Education Maintenance Allowance (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 for EMA?

- Young people are eligible to receive or to continue receiving EMA in the EMA year 2009/10 providing:
 - They will already be 16, 17 or 18 on the 1st September 2009
 - 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
- The amount of EMA that a young person is eligible to receive in 2009/10 is dependent on their household income which must be £30,810 or less in the previous tax year, 2008-2009. The young person will then receive £10, £20 or £30 – a breakdown is as follows:

Up to £20,817	£30
More than £20,817 but less than or equal to £25,521	£20
More than £25,521 but less than or equal to £30,810	£10

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Diplomas

The Diploma is part of a national programme to improve the choice of courses for young people to motivate them and encourage them to continue learning for longer. It will help them to gain the qualifications they need for success – at work, at college or at university. For more information visit: www.direct.gov.uk/diplomas

14-19 prospectuses

14-19 prospectuses are an online resource which provides information for young people on all learning courses and programmes available in each local area. They can be viewed via the national portal at www.direct.gov.uk/14-19prospectus

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