



Back to Education Allowance Scheme Extended

The Back to Education Allowance (BTEA) is an educational opportunities scheme for unemployed people, lone parents and people with disabilities in receipt of particular payments from the Department of Social and Family Affairs. The objective of the scheme is to enhance the employability skills of vulnerable groups.

The Department of Social and Family Affairs wishes to remind clients that the Back to Education Allowance scheme now includes people who have been given statutory redundancy from an employer. With effect from this academic year, 2007/'08, those who have received statutory redundancy may access the scheme.

An entitlement by the person to a relevant social welfare payment needs to be established prior to commencing an approved course of study.

In a further extension of the BTEA scheme, the qualifying period for Illness Benefit recipients has been reduced from 3 to 2 years.

During 2006, the Government spent €52.07 million on the scheme. In the 2006/2007 academic year 8,090 people participated in the scheme – an increase of over 11% on the number of participants in the previous academic year. It is anticipated the spend will be in the region of €68 million in 2007.

Participants in the scheme receive a standard weekly rate of payment equivalent to the relevant Social Welfare payment they were in receipt of prior to participation in the scheme. In addition, an annual €400 Cost of Education



Department of Social and Family Affairs

Allowance is payable to all approved participants in the BTEA scheme. Participants may also continue to receive any secondary benefits to which they otherwise have an entitlement.

Issued by:

Niamh Fitzgerald 087 2547232

Editor's Note:

Second and third levels study options are available under the Scheme:

Under the Second Level option, a person may attend a second level course of study at any community, comprehensive, secondary or vocational school. The course pursued must be a full-time day course that leads to a certificate (such as a Junior Certificate/Leaving Certificate) that is recognised by the Department of Education and Science or validated by the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC).

Under the Third Level option, a person may attend an approved third level course of study at any university or third level institution. The course must be a full-time day course of study that is recognised by the Department of Education and Science for Higher Education Grant purposes or validated by the Higher Education Training and awards Council (HETAC).

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