



BACK TO EDUCATION ALLOWANCE EXTENDED FOLLOWING REVIEW

Mary Coughlan TD, Minister for Social and Family Affairs, has reviewed the Back to Education Allowance and is to extend it to continue to support students on post graduate courses which lead to a higher Diploma or a Graduate Diploma in Education.

”It is important that limited resources under the BTEA programme be directed at the more vulnerable in our society who need additional training or qualifications in order to gain a foothold in the labour market,” said Minister Coughlan.

”Adjustments were made in the scheme earlier this year to focus resources where the need is greatest,” added Minister Coughlan.

”I recently asked my officials to liaise with the relevant bodies to identify specific postgraduate courses such as the H.Dip. which add significantly to a person’s employability and to which the BTEA should continue to apply.

“As a consequence of this review my Department will continue to support those wishing to take up the Higher Diploma (H. Dip.) and Graduate Diploma in Education (Primary teaching),” said Minister Coughlan..

Because of the importance of supporting areas of greatest need, the decision to discontinue funding under the BTEA scheme for the summer period remains as many students can find seasonal work at home or



traditionally abroad. This decision applies only to BTEA participants who were in receipt of an unemployment payment prior to participation in the scheme.

However, all other participants (lone parents and people with disabilities) on the scheme remain unaffected by this decision and will retain payment during the summer period.

Where participants on the scheme who were previously in receipt of an unemployment payment are unable to find employment during the summer period, subject to satisfying the usual qualifying conditions, they may be entitled to Unemployment Benefit or Unemployment assistance.

Back to Education Allowance participants who are currently pursuing undergraduate courses of study will continue to receive funding under the scheme to the completion date of the course initially applied for.

Applicants already in possession of third level qualifications have already achieved a high level of academic attainment, which should impact positively on their employment prospects.

The Department of Social and Family Affairs has written to approximately 4,000 people on the Back to Education Allowance informing them of the revised scheme and inviting applicants from students intending to pursue Higher Diploma and Graduate Diploma in Education courses.

ENDS

12TH May 2003