London, 2nd June: If you’re passionate about your Wii, live for nights-in with your Playstation and rush out to buy the newest games for your XBox, why not consider turning your passion into a career? There are thousands of opportunities in the computing and gaming industries, with only a course standing between you and your dream job. You could be putting your natural skills and interests to real work, and with the support of Education Maintenance Allowance you could get up to £30 per week to help with your studies.

With the popularity of gaming ever increasing, the biggest brands are constantly on the hunt for new talent. There are some fantastic job opportunities out there, varying from games programmer, designer or environment mapper, audio engineer or composer, animator or games artist, and even games testers. Those at the top of the game are true fanatics, with expert skills to match. So, if you are passionate about gaming, why not see if you can gain the expertise you need, with BTEC National Certificates such as IT Practioners or Music Technology, or AS Levels in Information & Communication Technology or Computer Studies all available. You may even be eligible for financial support from EMA.

That’s exactly what gaming mad Sam Lemmon did, he is now on his way to achieving his childhood dream of designing his own graphics hero. After a year studying AS Levels at sixth form college, Sam discovered the BTEC National
Certificate for IT Practitioners that would equip him to then go on and study a BSc in Computer Games Programming at university.

“I’ve always been really into computers and gaming, spending most of my teens saving-up pocket money to buy the newest software. I hadn’t even considered that I might be able to have a career in what I was passionate about, so when I found that in fact there were courses that would equip me with the skills to turn my hobby into a fulltime career, it was fantastic. The added bonus was that I was eligible for financial support from EMA that enabled me to buy all the extra equipment I needed on for my course. Now I’m going to university and looking forward to getting started with my career as a computer gaming programmer!”

Not only can all those committed gamers apply for courses today to pursue one of the many creative roles available, but they could also be eligible for financial support too. Education Maintenance Allowance is a great opportunity for young people aged 16, 17 and 18 to earn up to £30 per week to put towards whatever they need.

For the opportunity to bag yourself a top job in the computing and gaming industries, why not check out the huge variety of courses offered at schools and colleges near you. Education Maintenance Allowance offers up to £30 per week directly into your bank account, to be spent on whatever you want, with the possibility of qualifying for bonuses for meeting agreed targets.

-Ends-

For further information and interviews with case studies contact:
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Notes to editors:

This press release applies to England only.

**Learning and Skills Council**
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.

Visit [www.direct.gov.uk/ema](http://www.direct.gov.uk/ema) or call the EMA helpline on 0800 121 8989 for more information.

**Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)**

This press release applies to England only. Separate schemes are operated by the administrations for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

**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 or 18 on the 1st September 2008;
  - 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

**14-19 area prospectuses**

14-19 area 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: [http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/index.cfm?sid=41](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/index.cfm?sid=41). From 2008, learners will be able to access information on the new Diplomas being delivered in their area, through the online prospectuses.

**Diplomas**

The Diploma is part of a national programme to widen 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.