DIPLOMA EXTENSION TO INCREASE CHOICE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

LSC supports Diplomas extension, which will lead to more young people to remaining in learning

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The extension of Diplomas, announced yesterday, should encourage more young people to remain in learning by increasing the options available from age 14.

Diplomas will boost young people’s earning potential and make them more employable through the attainment of higher levels of qualifications, according to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

LSC today welcomes Diplomas to the range of learning options now available, allowing young people to learn in new ways and not just in the classroom. Diplomas will provide a range of academic and work-related skills, ensuring young people can progress to employment, college or other study routes, such as University. With support from higher education institutions such as Cambridge University, Diplomas will provide a suitable entry qualification to degree courses.

ONS data demonstrates that the higher level of qualification a young person achieves, the higher their combined earnings over their lifetime. For example,
those with GCSE grades A-C will earn £1,022,112 over a working lifetime compared to just £873,392 for those with no qualifications.

Meanwhile previous research undertaken by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) shows that close to three quarters (74 per cent) of recruiters think it is now vital for school leavers to have the equivalent of at least two A-Levels or a vocational equivalent.\textsuperscript{ii}

Chris Banks, Chair of the LSC, said:
“The announcement that additional Diplomas will be introduced in Science, Languages and the Humanities is very good news, and will be welcomed by all those involved in the provision of 14-19 education and training.

“From my own position, being involved in both industry and education, I can say that I am sure this will be welcomed particularly by employers. It is a clear and emphatic statement that the Government recognises the place of applied learning in all curriculum areas, and is a further step towards a coherent and comprehensive offer for all young people, offering a wide range of entry points and learning pathways, covering a broad range of skills.

“We also welcome the establishment of an Expert Advisory Group, including very senior figures from schools, colleges, higher education and industry, which will benefit hugely from having the original architect of the Diploma framework – Mike Tomlinson – as a member. The LSC has worked very closely with the partnerships and consortia established to deliver the existing planned 14 Diplomas and is represented on the Expert Advisory Group by National Council members, Malcolm Trobe and Professor Deian Hopkin. We look forward to working with all partners to ensure the success of this exciting new initiative.”
Notes to editors:
This press release applies to England only.

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 555 16 to 19 year olds. Fieldwork was undertaken between 11th - 18th May 2007. The survey was carried out online.

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.lsc.gov.uk/inourhands](http://www.lsc.gov.uk/inourhands) or call 0800 011 30 30 for more information.

Apprenticeships
There are currently 250,000 apprentices working in over 130,000 organisations in England alone.

They can choose from over 200 career paths in 80 different sectors of industry and commerce.

Anyone aged 16 and above is eligible to complete an Apprenticeship.

Apprenticeships provide individuals with a mixture of on and off-the-job training whilst being paid.

For employers, Apprenticeships offer the opportunity to improve their businesses bottom line through the tailored, relevant training of highly motivated individuals.

There are two levels of Apprenticeships:
- ‘Apprenticeships’, equivalent to GCSE level, incorporate a National Vocational Qualification to Level 2; key skills and in some cases a technical certificate
- ‘Advanced Apprenticeships’, equivalent to A-levels, incorporate a National Vocational Qualification to Level 3, key skills and a technical certificate

Education Maintenance Allowance
Notes for editors – EMA Applications for 2007/8 Year
This press release applies to England only. Separate schemes are operated by the administrations for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Those who remain in full-time learning at 16 can boost their family income, as some households remain entitled to other benefits such as Child Tax Credit and Child Benefit worth just over £3,000 per year. This is in
addition to the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) payment that can be up to £30 a week plus bonuses and is paid direct to a young person.

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 2007/08 providing:
  - They will already be 16, 17, 18 or 19 on the 1st September 2007;
  - Household income criteria for 2007/8 applicants will be confirmed shortly;
  - 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

- They must be:
  - a person who is ‘settled’ in the UK, and been ordinarily resident in the UK for at least the three years prior to the start of his learning programme; or
  - a national of any European Union (EU) country or the spouse or civil partner or child of an EU national, and been ordinarily resident in the European Economic Area (EEA) for at least the three years prior to the start of his learning programme; or
  - an EEA migrant worker or the spouse or civil partner or child of an EEA migrant worker, who is ordinarily resident in the UK at the start of the learning programme and has been ordinarily resident in the EEA throughout the three year period prior to that; or
  - recognised as a refugee by the UK Government, or the spouse or civil partner or child of a refugee, have been granted Humanitarian Protection, or have EU Temporary Protection.

- If a young person lives overseas as part of a family serving with HM Forces or the Ministry of Defence in Germany or Cyprus, they should call Service Children’s Education on (0049) 2161 908 2525 for further advice.

Application
Evidence of an applicant’s household income for the previous tax year 2006/2007 and proof of the individual’s operational bank account are required.

Eligible applicants will receive a Notice of Entitlement explaining how much they will receive once they have enrolled and started attending their learning programme.
EMA Contract
Once enrolled, the student must attend all course sessions and sign an EMA Contract with their school or college. The contract sets out what is expected in terms of attendance, coursework and progress.

\[1\] Source: Office for National Statistics, LFS Spring 2006 reweighted. Average weekly earnings of employees multiplied by the number of weeks worked in an average working lifetime.

\[2\] Research was conducted online between 19\textsuperscript{th} and 23\textsuperscript{rd} July 2007 by YouGov Plc who interviewed a bespoke sample of 271 recruiting managers. YouGov is a member of the British Polling Council.