

December 2010

Dear student

You may have heard in the media that the government has recently announced the ending of the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) Scheme.

We are disappointed in the decision to end the EMA scheme and realise this will be disappointing for you and your family. In coming to this decision, the government has looked closely at research findings, which indicate that the availability of EMA has not been a determining factor in young people's participation, or the choices made about continuing in education and training after the age of 16. In fact, current evidence suggests that around 90% of young people who receive EMA would still have participated in learning if the scheme was not available.

The scheme will close to new applicants from 1 January 2011, and will close entirely at the end of the 2010/11 academic year (31 July 2011).

EMA payments will still be made up to the end of this academic year for students who are currently receiving EMA, and those starting courses in the 2010/11 academic year after 31 December can still receive EMA providing they have made their EMA application before Christmas.

EMA is being replaced, from September 2011, with an enhanced discretionary learner support fund, enabling closer targeting of financial support to individual young people who face a real financial barrier to participation, although the full details of eligibility have yet to be announced.

Students continuing their education in September 2011 who need financial help with learning costs may be eligible for support from the enhanced discretionary learner support fund and will need to contact Student Support for more information in the spring and summer terms, when we hope this information will be available.

If you have any queries about this, or are concerned about how you will be able to return to College in September 2011, please do not hesitate to contact Student Support by either dropping in to the office or calling 01293 442204.

Yours faithfully



Alison Moore
Director of Student Support