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## **Back to Education Allowance**

If you are receiving the One Parent Family Payment then you may access second or third level education through the Back to Education Allowance scheme.

To qualify you must:

- Be at least 21 years of age
- Receiving One Parent Family Payment, Carer's Allowance, Widow's Pension or Disability Allowance for 3 months if you wish to attend second level education or 9 months for third level education

Time spent on FAS training courses, on a CE scheme, FIT, Failte Ireland, VTOS, BTEA and BTWA can count towards the qualifying period as stated above

If you are aged between 18 and 20 and have been receiving OPFP for the required period of time and been out of education for 2 years then you may also qualify. Likewise, if in receipt of Disability Allowance and aged 18 or over and receiving the payment for the required length of time then you will also qualify for the Back to Education Allowance.

The Allowance is paid at the standard rate but in addition to this there is an annual Cost of Education Allowance of €300 a year (in 2012), payable at the start of the academic year.

If you qualify you will also keep your entitlement to secondary benefits such as the Fuel Allowance, Christmas bonus and the Rent Supplement or Mortgage Interest Supplement

Your choice of course must be full-time to be considered for the BTEA. At second level education it must be recognised by the Dept of Education and Skills or FETAC or City and Guilds. At third level it must be recognised by the Dept of Education and Skills for Higher Education Grant purposes, VEC scholarship scheme, Third Level Maintenance Grant Scheme for trainees or HETAC.

If you already have an undergraduate degree then only certain postgraduate courses can be followed under the Back to Education Allowance.

When you are accepted on a course, then make the application for the Back to Education Allowance and return it to the same section that makes your payment.

