Financing adult learning database

Name of the instrument - Local language	Back to Education Allowance (BTEA)
Name of the instrument - English translation	Back to Education Allowance (BTEA)
Scheme ID	295
Country	Ireland
Reporting year	2020
Type of instrument	Grant for individuals
Sub-type of instrument	Lump-sum support
Type of entry	Single instrument

Short description	The Back to Education Allowance (BTEA) is a scheme for unemployed people, lone parents, and people with disabilities who receive certain payments from the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DSP). The allowance is paid to people who wish to pursue approved second or third-level courses of education. The BTEA is not an unemployment payment and is paid instead of social welfare. The payment is matched to the benefit received by the applicant prior to receipt of the Back to Education Allowance. Those with a dependent child receive an annual Cost of Education Allowance of EUR 500 in addition.

Level of operation	National
Name of a part of the country	Not applicable
Name of the region (for regional instruments)	Not applicable
Name of the sector (for sectoral instruments)	Not applicable
Relevance	Key instrument
Legal basis	Government Decision S.29416 of 8 October 1996
Objective(s) and	The BTEA is a non-statutory second-chance education

target(s)	scheme for jobseekers, lone parents and people with disabilities currently in receipt of certain qualifying social welfare payments who would like to undertake a full-time second or third level education course, but retain access to a welfare payment.
Year of implementation	1998
Operation/management	The BTEA is administered and managed by the Department of Social Protection.
Eligible group(s)	Eligible groups must receive one of a set of support payments from the DSP for at least 3 months for second level option or 9 months for the third level options. Eligible people must be out of formal education for two years (if aged between 18 and 21) or aged at least 21 (aged 24 for the postgraduate study option).
Education and training eligible	Second level qualifications can be attained at community, comprehensive, secondary or vocational schools and must be a full-time day course, lead to a qualification recognised by the Department of Education and Skills or lead to a qualification approved by Quality and Qualifications Ireland up to level The third level option covers courses at approved universities, third level colleges or institutions that are full-time day courses and approved by the Department of Education and Skills for the Student Grant Scheme or are recognised by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI).
Source of financing and collection mechanism	Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection
Financing formula and allocation mechanisms	The payment is matched to the benefit received by the applicant prior to receipt of the Back to Education Allowance. Those with a dependent child receive an annual Cost of Education Allowance of EUR 500 in addition.
Eligible costs	The BTEA allowance is paid as a social benefit rather than on pre-defined eligible cots.
Volumes of funding	2018: EUR 78 690 000 2017: EUR 93 860 000 2016: EUR 114 830 000
Beneficiaries/take up	2018: 8 816 2017: 10 916 2016: 13 895
Organisation responsible for monitoring/evaluation	Department of Social Protection (DSP)
Monitoring/evaluation reports available	ESRI, An Evaluation of the Back to Education Allowance (2015): https://www.esri.ie/system/files/media/file-uploads/2015-11/RS47.pdf
Most relevant webpage - in English	https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/ff3e80-back-to-education-programme-sw…
Most relevant webpage - local language	https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/ff3e80-back-to-education-programme-sw…
Recent changes	No recent amendment

	Recent changes in response to COVID-19 No changes
Sources	Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, Statistical Information on Social Welfare Services, Annual Report 2018: http://www.dsfa.ie/en/downloads/2018-Report.pdf
	Operational guidelines: back to education allowance, Department of Social Protection: https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/5afe0f-operational-guidelines-back-to…
	Service Guidelines, Back to Education Allowance, Department of Social Protection: https://www.gov.ie/en/service/418e3f-back-to-education-allowance/#
	Citizens Information, Back to Education Allowance: https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/social_welfare/social_welfare_pay…
	ESRI, An Evaluation of the Back to Education Allowance (2015): https://www.esri.ie/system/files/media/file-uploads/2015-11/RS47.pdf