

EMPLOY MY ABILITY

2022 - 2023



Real Jobs, Real Lives, Real Work

Welcome...

OUR STORY

Welcome to our college prospectus, thank you for your interest in Employ My Ability and the courses and work experience settings we offer.

We believe further education across our vocational settings is an exciting opportunity to develop your knowledge and work skills in preparation for adulthood and the world of work. Moving from school to college can be a challenging time for both young people and their families. We have developed a range of support options to help students manage this transition successfully and with our support we are confident you can meet and exceed your expectations.



Our specialist teams work hard to provide safe, bespoke learning environments, that support students to confidently gain knowledge and grow in confidence.

As an EMA student you will follow an individual timetable that is structured to meet all your needs; academically, vocationally, and emotionally supporting your overall wellbeing. Our education dovetails into our careers guidance socially and emotionally supporting your wellbeing, as well as both onsite and offsite work experience to make sure you gain the work skills needed to make use of your qualifications. Please contact us for more information, or to arrange a visit to either one of our very special colleges.

Thank you! - **Employ My Ability**

Employ My Ability (EMA) was founded in 2013 by a small group of professionals with experience in both child and adult education/social care settings. This small team held common principles and felt that they could offer an improved vocational education setting for young people with a Special Education Need living in Dorset. These ideas were further supported by the 2011 Green Paper on Support and Aspirations and the 2014 Children and Families Act, with these ideas, principles and Government strategies forming our three core beliefs:

- Young People with SEN have the potential to gain meaningful work in a range of vocational settings.
- Environment is key to people learning and these environments must be real and age appropriate.
- Young People with SEN should be given the opportunities to develop skills and transition into work environments.

Work began at The Walled Garden Moreton in January 2015. Our first project aims were to re-open the formal gardens at Moreton as a tourist attraction; develop a cafe for visitors and build the three classrooms; then market the gardens, attract paying visitors and build a busy business for students to gain real work experience in. By the time we were ready for students the gardens and café were attracting a good number of visitors and regular locals, with the work settings providing a good range of vocational areas to gain experience in.

In the September of 2015, we welcomed our first five students. These students benefited from individual timetables that had an emphasis on work experience across the site. Our approach of embedding the students within all areas of the commercial business, encouraging them to see themselves as adults and behave appropriately in their work settings, supported students in their formal learning too, with students developing skills and behaviours that were being transferred to the classroom. The combination of individualised timetables and a 70-30% split between work experience and the classroom proved a success, by supporting young people to achieve both their targets and learn the essential skills required for work. This continues to be the basis of EMA's approach to vocational education.

In October 2017 EMA purchased Thorngrove Garden Centre in Gillingham from the charity Scope. Thorngrove was already a well-established garden centre with a large customer base mirroring the real work settings at the Moreton campus. Employ My Ability continues to develop this site and increase the opportunities for the students who attend.

In September 2019 Thorngrove opened to eight students studying functional skills, vocational qualifications and work experience in all areas of the business. Since opening in 2014 we have grown from 5 students to 57.



LEARNING AT EMA

STUDENT STUDY PROGRAMME

Our education and training programmes have been specifically developed for Young People aged 16 -25 with Special Educational Needs (SEND). We are funded by the Education and Skills Fund Agency (ESFA) and Local Authorities.

We deliver Study Programmes that support students to develop new skills, knowledge and behaviours with a focus on Preparation for Adulthood (PfA) themes:

- Employment
- Independent Living
- Good Health
- Friends, Family and Relationships

Learning for most students is 30% classroom based and 70% practical across our onsite real working environments. This practical hands-on approach to learning supports students who have found school challenging, allowing them to develop skills, knowledge and behaviours for employment and adulthood.

Our Study Programmes can last up to 3 years and focus on:

- Developing the skills for employment in our onsite work experience settings
- External work placement
- Careers education, information, and advice
- Support to learn skills and knowledge to overcome barriers to gaining employment
- Employability skills, knowledge, and behaviours
- English, Maths, and ICT skills
- Achieving EHCP targets and outcomes
- Enrichment and wellbeing

- Vocational learning in Hospitality and Catering, Horticulture, Customer Service, Retail, Business, Skills and Animal Care (Animal care is only currently available at our Moreton campus)
- Travel training
- Personal development
- Independent Living Skills
- Tutorial and pastoral support
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Sports and recreation

At the start of the first term of Year 1, we work with all students to complete a full assessment of their ability and aspirations. The outcome of this enables us to construct an individualised Study Programme and timetable that is focused on specifically meeting their needs, as well as the targets in the student's EHCP; this supports their development and achievement into adulthood.

Study Programmes consist of a mixture of externally accredited, and non-accredited learning from Pre-Entry to GCSEs. We focus on challenging the student at the correct level and supporting their individual progression.

We strongly encourage our students to actively participate in tracking their own progress, by using Multi Me. Multi Me is a cloud based secure social platform for individuals with disabilities (and the circle of people that support them in their daily lives) which allows users to set and manage goals around their life and learning targets.

EXAMPLE STUDY PROGRAMME YEAR 1

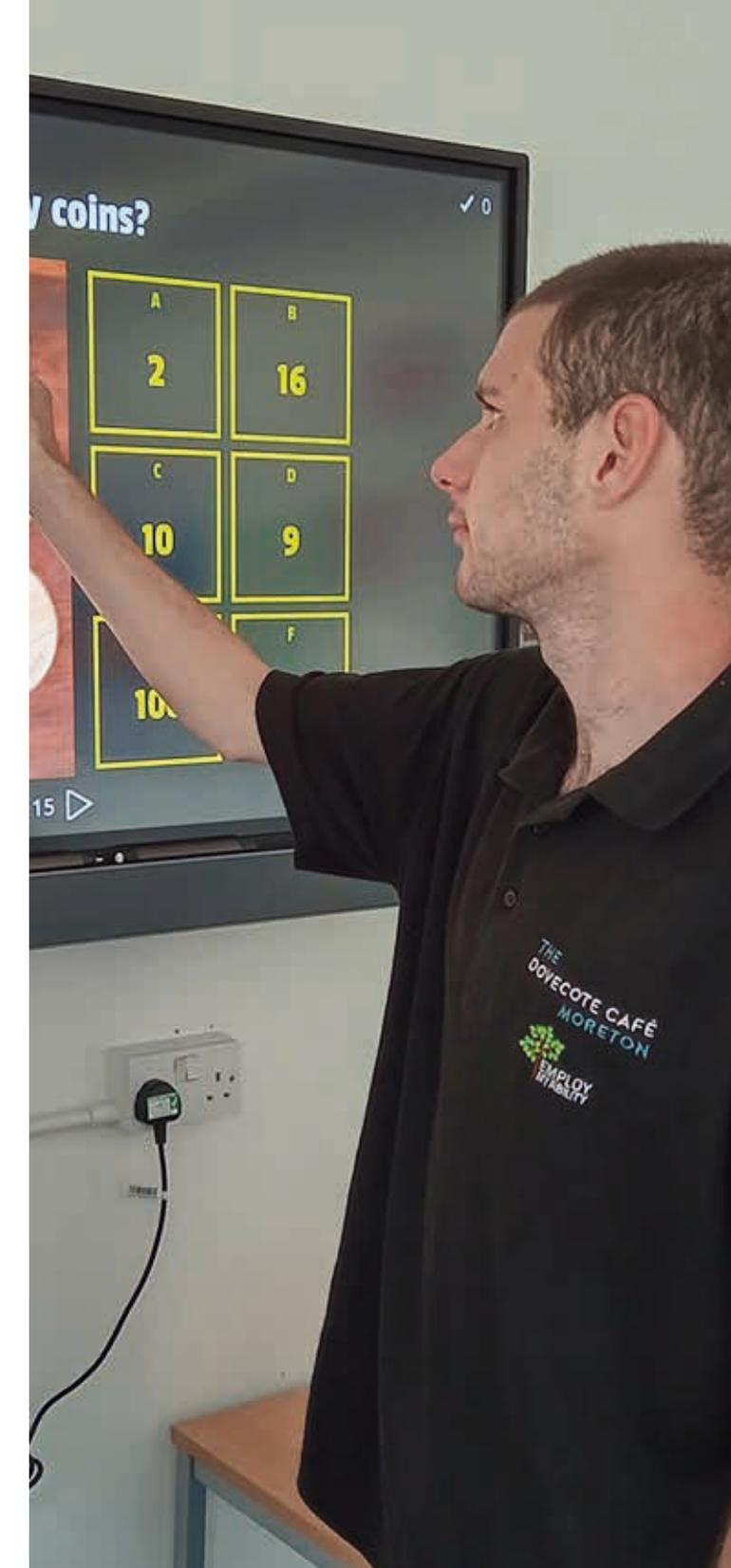
Days Attending	5
What do I want to learn and achieve?	I want to improve my English and Maths and look at different jobs I can do.
Study Programme Area	How will I learn?
Work Experience	Secret Garden Café Glasshouse Shrubs Maintenance Thorngrove Shop
English, Maths, and ICT skills	English E2 Maths E3 ICT E3
Vocational learning	Introduction to Hospitality Introduction to Landbased Studies E3 Vocational Studies Extended Certificate
Support to learn skills and overcome barriers to gaining employment (e.g. travel training, Personal Development, Independent Living Skills, EHCP Targets)	Personal Development Programme Independent Living Skills Programme
Employability skills	E3 Workskills Extended Award
Tutorial and pastoral support to develop skills	Daily morning, lunchtime and end of day tutorials Sports and Recreation Multi Me Session – recognising and recording progress and achievements

EXAMPLE STUDY PROGRAMME YEAR 2

Days Attending	4
What do I want to learn and achieve?	I want to work in a café and get a qualification in hospitality. I want to improve my English and Maths.
Study Programme Area	How will I learn?
Work Experience	Secret Garden Café Thorngrove shop
External Work Experience	Careers sessions and work with the Work Placement Coordinator to identify work placements close to the student's home
English, Maths, and ICT skills	English E3 Maths Level 1 ICT Level 1
Vocational learning	Level 1 Hospitality Qualification (1st year)
Support to learn skills and overcome barriers to gaining employment (e.g. travel training, Personal Development, Independent Living Skills, EHCP Targets)	Level 1 Hospitality Qualification (1st year) Personal Development Programme Independent Living Skills Programme
Employability skills	Work Experience targets
Tutorial and pastoral support to develop skills	Daily morning, lunchtime and end of day tutorials Sports and Recreation Multi Me Session – recognising and recording progress and achievements

EXAMPLE STUDY PROGRAMME YEAR 3

Days Attending	3
What do I want to learn and achieve?	I want to work in a café and get a qualification in hospitality. I want to improve my English and Maths.
Study Programme Area	How will I learn?
Work Experience	Secret Garden Café
External Work Experience	1 day working at a local café
English, Maths, and ICT skills	English E3 Maths Level 2 ICT Level 1
Vocational learning	Level 1 Hospitality Qualification (2nd year)
Support to learn skills and overcome barriers to gaining employment (e.g. travel training, Personal Development, Independent Living Skills, EHCP Targets)	Travel training
Employability skills	Work Experience targets
Tutorial and pastoral support to develop skills	Daily morning, lunchtime and end of day tutorials Multi Me Session – recognising and recording progress and achievements



CAREERS ADVICE & GUIDANCE

Employ My Ability is committed to enabling and encouraging all students to explore and experience different vocational and academic areas ensuring they have the tools to make meaningful decisions about their future career pathways. Employ My Ability recognises that Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance is crucial for our student's success and are committed to embedding the eight Gatsby benchmarks of Good Career Guidance across the curriculum.

These are:

1. A stable careers programme
2. Learning from career and labour market information
3. Addressing the needs of each pupil
4. Linking curriculum learning to careers
5. Encounters with employers and employees
6. Experiences of workplaces
7. Encounters with further and higher education
8. Personal guidance

Employ My Ability have a designated Careers Lead who is qualified to the recognised Level 6 standard of Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance. The lead, working in collaboration with colleagues, will oversee and monitor the policy, identify priorities and improvement plans, work with external Careers IAG professionals and ensure all students have access to a careers programme differentiated to meet their need.

CAREERS & WORKING



SUPPORTING YOUR CAREER PROGRESSION

Careers education, information and advice is embedded across the curriculum. Students are supported by the staff teams and the Work Placements Co-ordinator to experience positive career progression.

Tutors alongside the Work Placements Co-ordinator oversee your more formal employment related learning in college that includes building your CV, interview skills, job searching, and supporting you to explore different types of employment. The team also oversee your onsite work experience, ensuring that it enables you to progress into meaningful employment or career activity when you leave the college.

The Work Placements Co-ordinator offers progression interviews with all students ensuring you are supported to explore all of your options and progression routes.

Your Work Placements Co-ordinator is there to support you when you are ready to access offsite work experience in your local community. They will support you to find an appropriate employer and work alongside you and your employer to ensure that you both have a positive experience whilst feeling supported with taking this amazing next step.



**Positive
outcomes for
all students,
employers,
community
and EMA**

WORK EXPERIENCE

INTERNAL WORK EXPERIENCE

At Employ My Ability we offer internal work experience placements in the hospitality, catering, horticulture, animal care and retail sectors to provide our students with valuable experience into the world of work. Over the period of time our students spend with us they will have timetabled and structured vocational sessions where they will learn the skills they need to prepare them for work when they leave EMA. The learners have short term individual structured outcomes to achieve in each vocational department designed to help them develop their skills and continually progress and further their practical knowledge.



EXTERNAL WORK EXPERIENCE

Once our learners have developed a range of basic skills in their vocational range, they will be supported to find an external work experience of their choosing in their local area so as to encourage independent travel to their workplace. The external work placements are fully supported by a member of EMA staff to ensure the learner feels secure and supported for as long as is necessary. We like to try and give our students placement for one full day a week to encourage a routine and to maximise the development of their skills within this setting. Once the employer and student are comfortable, we reduce the support if appropriate so they can gain independence in the workplace.

As with our onsite work experience, short term outcomes are put in place with the student and the employer to continually progress their skills. These outcomes are reviewed at six week intervals to encourage continual growth. We have a wide range of local employer partners in the hospitality, horticultural, retail and animal care sectors across Dorset who facilitate these placements. Without their help we would really struggle to place our students, they provide the real world experience our students need to progress and we are always grateful for their assistance.



PREPARING FOR ADULTHOOD

Ensuring young people at Employ My Ability reach their full potential working towards Employment, Independence, Good Health and Healthy Relationships



Source: <https://www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do.htm>

AARON'S JOURNEY FROM EDUCATION TO EMPLOYMENT



Aaron started with us after spending time at a mainstream school, he had already completed work experience placements in a busy country pub and was keen to continue with his catering work. During his first year at Employ My Ability Aaron proved himself more than capable in the kitchen at our Dovecote Café and was soon impressing our chef team.

In his second year, Aaron oversaw the breakfast menu orders, delivering these to our customers to a high standard. It became very apparent that Aaron was more than ready for an external work placement, he independently researched different establishments that he would like to be considered for and he has managed to gain a placement at an independent brasserie in Dorchester. Despite government lockdowns around Covid 19, Aaron managed to increase his skills working for Taste Brasserie becoming an asset to their team.

“ I've really enjoyed my time at Taste Brasserie in Dorchester, and it has shown me that there is still is a lot for me to learn.

It has also has shown me how challenging it can be in the kitchen sometimes, but I wouldn't have it any other way. ”

- Aaron

Aaron then took his final exams at EMA where he achieved Level 2 certificates in Maths, Hospitality and Catering with a Level 1 qualification in ICT. In English he achieved Level 1 reading and Level 2 speaking and listening, alongside these Aaron also achieved Entry 3 qualifications in Vocational studies and Work skills.

Our Work Placement Coordinator supported him to update his CV and apply for employment at various hospitality workplaces with a view to obtaining paid work. After several interviews with potential employers, Aaron was offered and accepted a full-time role at a local Italian restaurant as a Chef de Partie.

Aaron is thriving in his working environment and has become a valued member of the team, displaying an amazing level of confidence and technical knowledge. Aaron's journey from mainstream school to employment has been wonderful to witness and he has worked hard to achieve the results.

“ Internal and external work experience placements are a vital area for our vision at EMA. It provides the stage for our classroom learning to be expressed in the real-life working environment. This is where we really see our students progress and it is a pleasure to watch them grow both with their confidence and their social skills. ”

- James Dunham, Head of Education



SUPPORTING STUDENTS DEVELOPMENT

We have always had a commitment to supporting our student's development as they move from young people into adulthood. We have never believed in 'just' educating our students, this will not support their transition into adulthood and the workplace.

Having working vocational sites supports students wellbeing as they learn real work skills in their work experience sessions, this develops their self-confidence and builds self-esteem. For our young people to be successful in their chosen field it's important we support their emotional and mental wellbeing. A young person who has these skills will have fewer barriers to learning and a better understanding of themselves and how to meet their own needs. We have developed a range of groups for students to be part of to support their social skills and enjoyment. (Please ask for more details on the groups we have when you enquire or visit).



“ It's been such a fantastic year for me for passing my exams. I'm so happy can't wait to do Level 1 in October when I'm back - Year 2 Student

Good place to learn and make new friends. - Ex-Student Shannon Smith ”

Students can access our Talk About group where they can explore how to express their feelings and build friendships and have an understanding and respect of other people and their feelings. We are committed to our student voice being at the very heart of everything we do at Employ My Ability. We have an active student council that meets every 4 weeks and has a representative from each tutor group, the chair of the student council is a member of the EMA Trustee Board. Our 'you said, we did' board lets students know how their suggestions have developed and changed the college.

Learner Voice

Alongside our student council we are committed to extending activities to ensure all learners have the ability and opportunity to contribute to curriculum planning, and the assessment of their college experiences. We are committed to increasing the reach and influence of learner voice activities.



Enrichment at Employ my Ability

Enrichment is all about boosting your overall wellbeing to help you to perform at your best while at college. You can improve your study performance through curricular Enrichments and enjoy time away from your studies through extra-curricular Enrichments.

You will be invited by your tutors to join any curricular Enrichments; meanwhile, you will choose at least one extra-curricular Enrichment to engage with for fun. Our extra-curricular Enrichment provision gives you varied opportunities to try something new or develop an interest alongside your main studies. Some are based online while others are conducted in person. So, whether you want to meet new people, improve skills or just have fun, we have an activity to suit you.

At the end of the each year students, families and staff enjoy the EMA Graduation Celebration, a real chance to celebrate the fantastic achievements of our students. It's a chance for our graduating students to celebrate with their friends and families as we wish them a sad but incredibly proud goodbye.

STUDENT FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Employ My Ability (EMA) receive a small budget from the Government for financial bursaries each academic year. These bursaries can help with the cost towards traveling to and from EMA, course equipment, college activities. This financial support helps students in completing their courses.

EMA also receives money from the Government to support eligible students with free meals whilst at college.

The funding we receive from the Government is not set and changes from year to year depending on what they have available to spend.

All applications are on a first come first served basis and can be submitted each term.

**Further information, eligibility criteria and application forms can be found on our website:
www.employmyability.org.uk/aboutus/studentfinancialsupport**

Alternatively call reception on 01929 405685 for further information.



THERAPIES

At Employ My Ability we are committed to providing a holistic range of therapies that support our students to fulfil their potential and have a better understanding of the world around them.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)

Cognitive behavioural therapy is a talking therapy that can help you manage your problems by changing the way you think and behave.

Drama Therapy

Drama Therapy can provide the context for participants to tell their stories, set goals and solve problems, express feelings, or achieve catharsis. Through drama, the depth and breadth of inner experience can be actively explored and interpersonal relationship skills can be enhanced.

Speech and Language Therapy

Students accessing speech and language therapy at EMA follow an individualised programme of targets, devised and reviewed each half term by our HCPC registered speech and language therapist. Targets are worked towards through a combination of individual, pair or group work and support both in class and during on-site work experience as appropriate to each individual. Our speech and language therapy assistant leads sessions and ensures that all staff are aware of the most effective ways to communicate with each of our young people and promote positive communication skills and friendships between students.

Symbols and signing are used throughout the college, with students who communicate well verbally also being given the opportunity to learn signing at our weekly Makaton Club, in order to help them communicate more effectively with peers who rely on this method.

Occupational Therapy

Students that require occupational therapy are referred to the local authority occupational therapy department who work closely with the students at EMA and their support team.

This is not an exhaustive list of the therapies we can offer students.

MORETON CAMPUS

The Walled Garden, Moreton

A beautiful five-acre landscaped formal garden situated in Moreton, Dorset. The village is close to the historic market town of Dorchester and situated on the River Frome.

The gardens re-opened to the public in May 2015 when Employ My Ability took over the site and have since undergone significant replanting and restoration, with the site now managed by our expert garden team (with help from the students too). The gardens are not only a free entry attraction for the public to enjoy, but they also play a vital role in providing diverse habitats within a small area, which means plant and wildlife can thrive at a more abundant level than they might in less diverse locations.

Our curriculum is shaped from the environment at the Walled Garden which is home to:

- The Dovecote Café
- Formal gardens
- Kitchen garden
- Animal and family area
- Garden Shop

Students complete functional, vocational and Recognising and Recording Progress Achievement and Destination (RARPAD) qualifications that are complimented by the real working environment that they are part of. Employ My Ability students work alongside the teams in everyday tasks, and as the Gardens, Café and Animal area are open to the public, they have a high-profile presence when carrying out their work and studies, in the same way in which the staff team have.

This is a fundamental part of the students learning. They are part of the team working to present the site as a beautiful place for visitors to come to. This often gives the students a sense of purpose about their studies. Not only do they see physical results of their work, but they see the enjoyment it brings to the visitors.



GILLINGHAM CAMPUS

Thorngrove Garden Centre, Gillingham

A traditional garden centre in the heart of Gillingham which has been operating for over 50 years. Thorngrove was acquired by Scope as their first residential home in 1963 and the garden centre officially opened in 1967. Employ My Ability purchased Thorngrove Garden Centre in 2017 and embarked on an exciting and inspiring programme of regeneration which included the new Secret Garden Café, a re-vamped Garden Centre Shop, and the creation of modern teaching spaces.

Students complete functional, vocational and RARPAD qualifications that are complimented by the real working environment that they are part of. Employ My Ability students work alongside the teams in everyday tasks, and are an essential part of key operations in the Café, garden centre, plant nursery and glasshouses. (Which are all open to the general public).



They have a high-profile presence when carrying out their work and studies, in the same way in which the staff team have.

This is a fundamental part of the students learning. They are part of the team working to present the site and fantastic plants, most of which are grown onsite (something Thorngrove prides itself on). As with Moreton, this also gives the students a sense of purpose about their studies. Not only do they see physical results of their work, but they see the enjoyment it brings to the visitors.

RESPITE SERVICES

Our respite service is situated in Moreton close to the college grounds. In the same building as our Adult Day Service. Respite offers an opportunity for individuals to experience and develop skills to support independence as well as offering regular breaks to parents and carers. The service is person centred and allows individuals to plan activities and look at what they would like to achieve during their stays. Respite is supported 24-hours a day and can be booked during weekdays, weekends, and college holidays.

SUPPORTED LIVING & DAY SERVICES

Employ My Ability have a range of supported living services both in Moreton and Dorchester. Our supported living services are run by a dedicated Manager of Adult Social Care with a team of support workers, senior support workers and a deputy manager. The support is delivered 24-hours a day and is specific to each individual's needs and outcomes.

Supported living provides an environment that promotes independence and an opportunity to learn the responsibilities of living independently and holding a tenancy agreement. Individuals will have a support plan which identifies outcomes they wish to achieve and skills they wish to learn which will enable them to live a more independent and fulfilled life. This includes focuses on cooking, cleaning, laundry, shopping, budgeting, decision making, maintenance, and accessing the community.

Our adult day service aims to be an extension of these supported living aims. Offering sessions in basic life skills such as finances, cleaning, cooking and decision-making, combined with activities and outings that enrich the lives of those who attend. Each attendee is encouraged to feed into the planning of sessions so that these can be focused on what the group wishes to achieve, building upon teamwork and relationship skills. The work-based outcomes of Employ My Ability also form part of the adult day service, with opportunities for work-based groups within our café, maintenance, and gardening teams on site or with support accessing external work placements. The day service is open to both those who reside in supported living and external attendees, offering group and 1:1 support.

FUNDING

Funding for all these services can be by private arrangement or funding may be available through the local authority, depending on assessed needs and requirements.

If you are interested in finding out more about us and would like to have a look around – we are more than happy to organise this. Just contact us on 01929 405 685. We believe every young person is different and we embrace this individuality ensuring each young person's transition is tailored to meet their needs.

Visits

If you would like to come and visit us and have a look at Employ My Ability and meet staff and students, this can be easily arranged.

Referral

Once you have decided EMA is the place for you, you can make a referral. We will send / email you a referral form to complete or complete it during your visit. Students, parents, carers and professionals can make referrals.

Taster Sessions

We are more than happy to organise taster sessions for young people to give them an insight into what we do and support them in making their choice about their future.

Student Assessment

After we receive your completed referral we will arrange a time for our assessment to be completed. One of the team will come out and meet with you and your family – in order to complete the assessment. This ensures we have all the information we need to support you academically and emotionally.



SAFEGUARDING

Employ My Ability places the upmost importance on safeguarding and the safety and wellbeing of all our students. We share the belief that safeguarding is everybody's responsibility and have a dedicated safeguarding team that promotes awareness and is always available to provide support to students, their families and our staff team.

All staff, volunteers and trustees are trained in both children and adult safeguarding and we have established safeguarding policies and procedures in place. Safeguarding themes are embedded into our curriculum and we pride ourselves on going above and beyond to make college a safe, happy and thriving environment for all.



EMPLOY MY ABILITY INITIAL EDUCATION REFFERAL FORM



Name of Learner			
Address of Learner			
Contact Number			
Next of Kin			
Date of Birth		Allergies / Medication	
Current Provision		Preferred Site	Moreton Thorngrove

Please note all learners will be required to complete the induction skills package and will be encouraged to have taster sessions in a number of vocational areas.

Activities you would be interested in	Yes / No	Specific hopes and wishes
Horticultural – working in the gardens / nursery		
Catering – working in the café, food preparation		
Animal Studies and work experience		
Support to get paid employment and / or voluntary work		Types of jobs:
Administration – office work		
Literacy and Numeracy		
Other – please specify		

Continue form on reverse of page

	Name	Email	Contact Number
Careers Advisor			
Social Worker			
Other			

Referrer			
Contact Number			
Relationship to Learner		Date	

Additional comments:

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Please declare whether you have any unspent convictions or current proceedings against you.

Yes / No

If you answer yes we will ask you for further details. Your response will not stop you from being offered a place at our college. We need to have this information to ensure your safety and the safety of our students and staff and make our decision based on your full assessment, not on your answer to this question.

Please return to:

By post: Employ My Ability, The Walled Gardens, Moreton, Dorchester, Dorset, DT2 8RH

Email: referrals@employmyability.org.uk Tel: 01929 405 685



EMPLOY MY ABILITY

Real Jobs, Real Lives, Real Work

Follow our story



employmyability.org.uk

Telephone: 01929 405685 Email: office@employmyability.org.uk

Moreton Campus

The Walled Garden, Moreton, Dorset, DT2
8RH. Telephone: 01929 405685

Gillingham Campus

Thorngrove Garden Centre, Gillingham, Dorset,
SP8 4RE. Telephone: 01929 405685

