

Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)

WHAT IS EMA?

EMA is a payment made to school and college students aged 16-18, conditional on regular course attendance. They are means-tested, based on the previous year's income of the household in which the student lives. They are not available to students in advanced education, where student loans and grants apply.

WILL EMA AFFECT MY FAMILIES BENEFIT?

No, EMA is ignored for benefit and tax credit purposes. It is paid into the student's own bank account.

HOW MUCH IS EMA?

EMA is a weekly (term-time) payment plus certain bonuses.

Entitlement to weekly payments is calculated as follows:

Household Income	Payment (per student)
Up to £20,817 p.a.	£30
£20,818 - £25,521 p.a.	£20
£25,522 - £30,810 p.a.	£10
Over £30,811 p.a.	nil

2008–2009 Figures

Bonuses of £100 are payable in January, July and October if the student remains on their course and makes good progress with their learning.

WHO CAN QUALIFY FOR EMA?

Students whose household income is within the limits must also meet the following criteria:

- aged 16 to 18;
- UK nationals, or with indefinite leave to remain in the UK, or with refugee status;
- some EU students may qualify.

EMA is paid to children living in foster homes or in care (no proof of income is required)

The courses must amount to at least 12 hours of guided learning per week in school sixth form, sixth form college, or further education college. Eligible courses include AS/A2, GCSEs, GNVQs, NVQs and other vocational qualifications such as Entry to Employment (E2E).

Application forms should be available at the student's school/college. Alternatively, they are available to download from the Department for Education and Skills website, or by calling 0800 121 8989.

The Higher Education Student Support Guarantee (HESSG) is due to be introduced in September 2008. This will provide further financial support for current 16 year old EMA recipients if they move on to higher education.

MORE INFORMATION

The Welfare Rights Service provide a range of guides and briefing notes available from Adult Social Care Offices and online on the intranet and internet at:

<http://www.leics.gov.uk/>

Welfare Rights Officers are based at Social Care Service offices throughout the county. If you require further information about anything on this leaflet or some general advice concerning welfare rights issues contact your local office.