



Education Maintenance Allowance Money for courses for sixth form and college students.

Parents should be aware that their son, daughter or young person who they may have parental responsibility for, may be eligible to receive financial assistance towards their continuing education.

The Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) has been introduced by the government to help young people to enter and stay in further education after completing their compulsory school years.

WHAT IS THE EMA?

- A means-tested fortnightly payment of up to £60 (£30 per week), paid directly to eligible students who stay on in education at a school or college after they reach the compulsory school leaving age. Further bonus payments of £100 are available if students remain on their course and progress with their learning.
- To receive the EMA the young person agrees and signs a two-part Learning Contract with the school or college they will study at. This sets out what is expected of them in terms of attendance, coursework and progress. They will need to meet the requirements of this contract in order to receive the EMA.
- It is paid into the student's bank account each week for the weeks of attendance but is not paid during school or college holidays. If the student has Special Educational Needs and requires their payments to be made to a third party, you can supply details of the nominated person.
- The EMA is normally available for up to three years. However the EMA will be available over a four year period for those young people who may need additional time in further education to achieve their full potential.

WHO CAN GET THE EMA?

Your son or daughter/young person whom you have parental responsibility for, may qualify if:

- They are aged 16, 17, 18 or 19 years on or between 2nd July 2006 and 1st July 2007.
- Your household income is below £30,810.
- They intend to study at least 15 hours of guided learning, which is attendance at an FE college or to study full time at school in Northern Ireland.

Young people, who do not live with their parents may qualify if they are:

- Parents themselves
- Estranged from their parents and in receipt of Income Support
- In Care or are Care leavers



HOW MUCH IS THE EMA?

There are three levels of EMA depending on the level of household income:

- Up to £20,817 - £30 per week
- £20,818 - £25,521 - £20 per week
- £25,522 - £30,809 - £10 per week

There are also bonus payments of £100 for students who remain on the course and make satisfactory progress with their learning.

WILL IT AFFECT OTHER BENEFITS I RECEIVE?

No it won't affect any benefit payments e.g. Income Support, Child Benefit, Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit and any other types of financial help. It doesn't affect any money the student earns from a part-time job.

HOW TO APPLY FOR THE EMA?

It is the young person who should complete the application form and not the parent. A downloadable application form and guidance notes (in English and Irish), is available from the Department of Employment and Learning's website – www.delni.gov.uk or your son or daughter can get it from their school/college. They can also get a copy from their local Jobs and Benefits office/Job Centre. For further information on the application process you can contact *the EMA Customer Services Team on 0845 601 7646*.

Send your completed application form to:

*EMA Customer Services
Admail 3864
Belfast
BT1 3ZY*

Please note that the closing date for EMA applications, for the academic year 2007/2008 is 31st March 2008.

WHAT INFORMATION SHOULD BE PROVIDED ON THE APPLICATION FORM

As the parent you will need to provide evidence of your household income for the last complete tax year. If you have already provided this information to the Inland Revenue as part of your Tax Credit Review, then you will only need to provide your Tax Credit Award Notice (TCAN)

*If you would like help with any other family issue, Please ring **Parents Advice Centre** for guidance and support on **Freephone 0808 8010 722** or email parents@pachelp.org
(The Department for Employment and Learning NI is the main source of information for this factsheet)*