

Education Maintenance Allowance – Conditions of Award Academic Year 2025/2026

You have been granted an EMA as shown in the letter of award. The award is subject to the terms and conditions below, and it is in your own interest to read these notes carefully and comply with the instructions. Failure to do so may result in delays or loss of payment/s.

Application Process

- A fresh application must be made each academic year.
- Applications can only be accepted where the applicant has reached the statutory school leaving age and has a date of birth between 01 March 2006 and 28 February 2010.
- You must complete an Education Maintenance Allowance Learning Agreement signed by yourself, your parent/guardian and by the Guidance Teacher/Keyworker of the school/learning centre you are attending. You must adhere to the terms of the learning agreement or payments will be stopped immediately.

Assessment of Allowance

- You should not be in receipt of any other maintenance award from any source.
- In extreme circumstances e.g. redundancy, EMA awards can be based on current income and a provisional payment can be made.

Attendance & Progress

- Award holders at school must attend for a minimum of 21 guided learning hours per week, and there must be at least 3 school days (that can include in-service days) for payment to be made for that week.
- **Absence** – award holders will only receive an EMA payment for those weeks where 100% attendance has been maintained except in the case of genuine medical absence. Absence due to family holidays taken in term time and similar reasons are unacceptable even if school staff have given permission.
- **Persistent Late-coming** – if a student has more than two late-comings in any one week, the EMA payment will be stopped for that week.
- **Conduct** – where a student is not complying with the school/learning centre's discipline policy, the school/learning centre can contact Education Services and request that EMA payments be suspended / stopped for that student.
- **Progress** – all students should progress in their studies. EMA payments can be stopped if students do not make progress with their studies.
- The award will continue to be paid only if reports on your attendance, behaviour, work and progress are satisfactory.

Payment

- Payments to students will be made on a 2-weekly basis (however there will be larger gaps in payment at certain times of the year due to school holidays) and will be paid directly into the applicant's bank account (only in exceptional circumstances will EMA be paid into someone else's account i.e. additional learning needs).
- Successful applicants should check with their own bank in the first instance to ascertain when / what EMA payments have been paid into their bank account for the relevant period. Please contact your school/learning centre directly if payment has not been made into your bank account in accordance with the schedule of payments. Please also contact your school/learning centre directly if you feel that a weekly payment may be missing, as this may be a problem with your attendance that only your school/learning centre can resolve.
- In schools, EMA will be paid throughout your study leave and up until the last exam on the exam calendar. If you leave after your exams then you will miss out on the remaining weekly payments.
- If you change your bank account you must inform this office in writing at least 14 days in advance of the payment date.
- If for any reason your award is overpaid you will be requested to refund any overpayment to the Authority.
- Autumn Intake - Payment will be backdated to the start of the academic year if the application form is received by the Authority by **30 September 2025**. Application forms received after this date will only be paid from the date that the application form was received.
- Winter Intake - Payment will be backdated to the start of the term in the new year if the application form is received by the Authority by **29 February 2026**. Application forms received after this date will only be paid from the date that the application form was received.
- Closing date – absolutely no application can be accepted after **31 March 2026** with the exception of Activity Agreements (HYPE).

Appeals

- If payment has been stopped or suspended because of attendance / late-coming / progress / conduct then please contact your school/learning centre directly.
- If payment has been refused for any other reason then any appeal should be made in writing to Education Benefits.