



# A introduction to EMA

## (Education Maintenance Allowance)

\*All information is based on academic year 25/26 and may be subject to change in future years.

# EDUCATION MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE

## EMA



- What Is EMA?
- Should I apply ?
- Household income ?
- How much could I get ?
- How to apply ?
- What happens next?

References relate to **“The little book of EMA for academic year 2025/26**



Department for the  
**Economy**  
[www.economy-ni.gov.uk](http://www.economy-ni.gov.uk)

[www.nidirect.gov.uk](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk)

For full information and terms and conditions see website guidance and documents



Department of  
**Education**

# EDUCATION MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE

## What is EMA?

- Education Maintenance Allowance is a **weekly allowance of £30 to help 16, 17, 18 and 19 year olds with the costs of further education.**
- Payments are made every 2 weeks as long as you continue to meet your school or college's attendance requirements.
- There are also 2 performance based bonuses of £100 normally paid out in January and June

# EDUCATION MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE

## Should I apply?

**You need to meet the following requirements to be able to get EMA:**

- **Age** - Your 16th, 17th, 18th or 19th birthday falls on or between 2 July 2024 and 1 July 2025 and you are starting or continuing in further education from September 2025.
- **Course** - You attend a post-compulsory further education course at an approved school or college in Northern Ireland. This must be full-time at school or a minimum of 15 guided hours per week at college, studying an eligible course and attending all classes.
- **Nationality and residency** If you're a UK citizen who normally lives in the UK you should be able to get EMA. If you're not a UK citizen you may still be able to get EMA, go to [www.nidirect.gov.uk](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk) for more information.
- **Household income – see table on next slide**

# EDUCATION MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE

## How much could I get ?

### Household income

The table below shows how much you can get based on your household income.

Annual household income	Weekly EMA entitlement
£20,500 or less	£30
Between £20,501 and £22,500 and there's <b>at least 1 other</b> dependant eligible for child benefit in your household, other than you.	£30
Between £20,501 and £22,500 and there are <b>no other</b> dependants eligible for child benefit in your household, other than you.	£0
£22,501 or more	£0

You won't be able to get EMA if you've been approved to receive a Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) Bursary or a Department for the Economy Further Education Award for the course you're applying for.

EDUCATION  
MAINTENANCE  
ALLOWANCE

## When and how to apply ?

- You need to complete an application form.
- You'll be able to get one from:
  - your school or college
  - **[www.nidirect.gov.uk](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk)**
- Application forms will be available from spring. You should return your application form as soon as possible.

# EDUCATION MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE

## What happens next



### You need to complete and return your EMA application form with the evidence we need

If you can't send the evidence we need right away, return your form without it. We won't be able to pay you until we get the evidence but this way we can make a start on your application earlier.



### We'll assess your application and send you an Award Letter

If we need further information or evidence to complete our assessment we'll contact you before you get your Award Letter.



### You need to sign Part 1 and Part 2 of your Learning Agreement with your school or college

#### Part 1

This part sets out the acceptable attendance for your course. You'll commit to attending the timetable defined by your school or college.

#### Part 2

This part sets out the learning objectives and goals that you must achieve to be eligible for bonus payments.



Your school or college need to tell us that you've been in attendance before we'll pay your EMA into your bank or building society account.