

EMA

EMA is a weekly award of £30 which is paid fortnightly to students who meet the eligibility criteria below.

It is intended to help cover the day-to-day costs that you have to meet when you stay on at school or college like travel costs, books and equipment for your course.

Who is entitled to EMA

You can get an EMA during academic year 2025/26 if you're aged 16, 17, 18 or 19 years on or between 2 July 2023 and 1 July 2024 and all of the following statements apply to you:

- your household income is £20,500 or less for households with one dependent child
- your household income is £22,500 or less for households with more than one dependent child
- you are full time at school or doing a minimum of 15 guided hours per week at college
- you are studying an eligible course and attending all classes
- you meet the nationality and residency rules set out in the EMA scheme
- you have not already received the maximum allowance for EMA which is 117 positive or negative weekly attendance confirmations over the total length of your course.

Further information on the EMA Scheme is available on the NI Direct website at [Education Maintenance Allowance explained | nidirect\(external link opens in a new window / tab\)](#)

Application Forms

Printed EMA application forms and guidance notes for new EMA applicants in academic year 2025/26 will be available from Northern Ireland schools and colleges from spring 2025. Downloadable application forms and guidance notes will also be available from the NI Direct website at [Education Maintenance Allowance application forms and guidance notes | nidirect\(external link opens in a new window / tab\)](#) , and in the meantime, some guidance for 2025/26 is available to view and download.

If you received EMA in academic year 2024/25 and are a returning student in academic year 2025/26, signing your 25/26 EMA Learning Agreement acts as a formal application for EMA support under the terms and conditions of that academic year. This replaces the need for you to complete and return a new application form. The Student Loans Company may look to confirm household income, however.

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Backdated EMA Payments

For academic year 2025/26, eligible students who submit their EMA Application Form to the Student Loans Company before 30 September 2025 will have their weekly allowance payments backdated to the beginning of term, whilst those who submit their application after 30 September will have their payments backdated to the date that it was received by the Student Loans Company.

Eligible returning students in academic year 2025/26 may also receive backdated EMA payments to the beginning of term when their EMA learning agreement is signed/agreed.

EMA payments remain subject to the Student Loans Company receiving confirmation that students are engaged in learning and have agreed their EMA Learning Agreement. We would still encourage students and learning centres to agree their EMA Agreement as early as possible.

EMA Learning Agreement via email/ electronically

Students generally have the option to complete and agree their EMA Learning Agreement via email / electronically or in hard copy, subject to the agreement of their Learning Centre.

Enquiries

If you have any queries about EMA, please contact the EMA Customer Services Team.

- Student Helpline 0300 200 7089 (Monday to Friday, from 8.00 am to 6.00 pm)
- Student Email ema_ni@slc.co.uk
- Learning Centre Helpline 0300 200 7089 (Select 'Option 5') (Monday to Friday, from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm)
- Learning Centre Email emainfo@slc.co.uk

