

What is Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)?

EMA is a weekly payment of £10, £20 or £30 a week depending on your household income. The money is intended to help with the day-to-day costs when you stay on at school or college – such as travel, books and equipment for your course.

It is paid directly into your bank account if you stay on in education at school or college after your GCSEs, and is available during term time for any academic or vocational course (up to level 3), which involves at least 12 hours of guided learning per week.

If you're entitled, you'll receive your EMA payment every week of your course as long as you turn up to your classes and show commitment to your course. Most young people will be able to get EMA for two to three years depending on how long they need to finish their studies.

And you could also get a bonus of £100 in January and July -and again in October if you come back for a second year. Bonuses depend on the progress you make with your course. That's £500 potential extra money over the two years.

So, not only could you get more cash in your pocket right now, but you're also going to earn yourself a brighter future with better job prospects when you've finished your studies.

Who is entitled to Education Maintenance Allowance?

Around half of all 16-year-olds studying in England should be able to get EMA. See if you fit the bill below:

- Your household income is up to £30,000 per year. You will need to check this with your parent or carer.
- Your 16th birthday is between 1 September 2003 and 31 August 2004.
- You're a UK national - that is, if you were born here, have UK citizenship or a UK passport,
 - or if you've been granted indefinite leave to remain or refugee status or if you're from a European Union
 - or European Economic Area country and satisfy the Home Student criteria (Check out www.homeoffice.gov.uk for more information).
- You're doing, or applying to do, at least 12 hours of guided learning on further education courses in school sixth forms, sixth form colleges and Further Education colleges. This includes a wide range of courses up to and including level 3, such as AS/A2, GCSEs, GNVQs, NVQs and other vocational qualifications.

- You reach the age of 16 between 1st September 2003 and 31st August 2004 and enter year 12 of full time education in the 2004/2005 academic year from September 2004.
- You reach the age of 16 between 1st September 2004 and 31st August 2005 and enter year 12 of full time education in the 2005/2006 academic year from September 2005; or
- You reach the age of 17 between 1st September 2004 and 31st August 2005 and enter year 13 of full time education in the 2005/2006 academic year from September 2005; or
- You reach the age of 18 between 1st of September 2004 and 31st August 2005 and enter a third year of full time education in the 2005/2006 academic year from September 2005(in pilot areas).

And remember...

EMA will not affect any other benefits your family might get. It's paid on top of any other support provided by the government, or any earnings from your part-time job.

Further information

- [Download a PDF](#) of the booklet "A Student's Guide to EMA"
- Call 0845 60 222 60 to request a copy of the booklet.
- Get more advice by calling free on 080 810 16 2 19.
- Visit [Directgov](#) to find out about other types of financial help available.

Your weekly payments

Overall, your household income has to be under £30,000 to qualify for EMA. If it is, check out what's due to you below:

For the academic year 2004/2005:

If your household income is:	
up to £19,630 per year	you get £30 per week
£19,631 - £24,030 per year	you get £20 a week
£24,031 - £30,000 per year	you get £10 a week

For the academic year 2005/2006

If your household income is:	
up to £20,270 per year	you get £30 per week
£20,271 - £24,850 per year	you get £20 a week
£24,851 - £30,000 per year	you get £10 a week