

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 directly to students, as long as you continue to meet the school's attendance requirements. It is intended to help cover the day-to-day costs that you have to meet when you stay on at school after compulsory schooling ends (Post 16), such as travel costs, books and equipment.

EMA payments can be stopped if a student is absent from school without a valid reason or if absence notes have not been provided.

Who is entitled to EMA?

You can get EMA if you're aged 16- 19 years, and all of the following statements apply to you:

- your household income is £20,500 or less for households with one dependent child or £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, 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.

You may be entitled to receive EMA for a maximum of three years, as long as the household income does not rise above the income threshold which applies to your household. The EMA is available over a four-year period for those young people who may need additional time in further education to achieve their full potential. Receipt of EMA will not affect any other benefits being received in the household.

How do I apply?

You need to complete an application form. You'll be able to get one from:

- Ardnashee School & College
- Your local Jobs and Benefits Office
- Careers Service Northern Ireland
- <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/publications/education-maintenance-allowance-application-forms-and-accompanying-notes>

Please note that completed application forms must not be returned to the school. Completed applications should be posted to **EMA Customer Service, PO Box 5591, Glasgow G52 9BJ.**

When do I apply?

Application forms are available from the Ardnashee School & college. You should return your application form as soon as possible, as far in advance of your course start date. Keep an eye on www.nidirect.gov.uk for updates about when to apply.

How do I get paid?

All EMA payments will be paid directly into a bank or building society account in your name. If you haven't already got an account set up in your own name, you should do so while you apply for EMA.

Bonus Payments

There are also 2 performance-based bonuses of £100 normally paid out in January and June. Bonus payments are made on the basis of how a student performs in school:

- Attendance
- Consistent hard work both at home and in school
- Completion of coursework on time and to a good standard
- Active engagement and contribution to class lessons

For further information, click on the links below:

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/how-apply-education-maintenance-allowance>

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-06/ema-ni-payment-guide-23-24-o-pdf.pdf>

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-02/ema-ni-little-book-of-ema-guide-24-25-pdf.pdf>