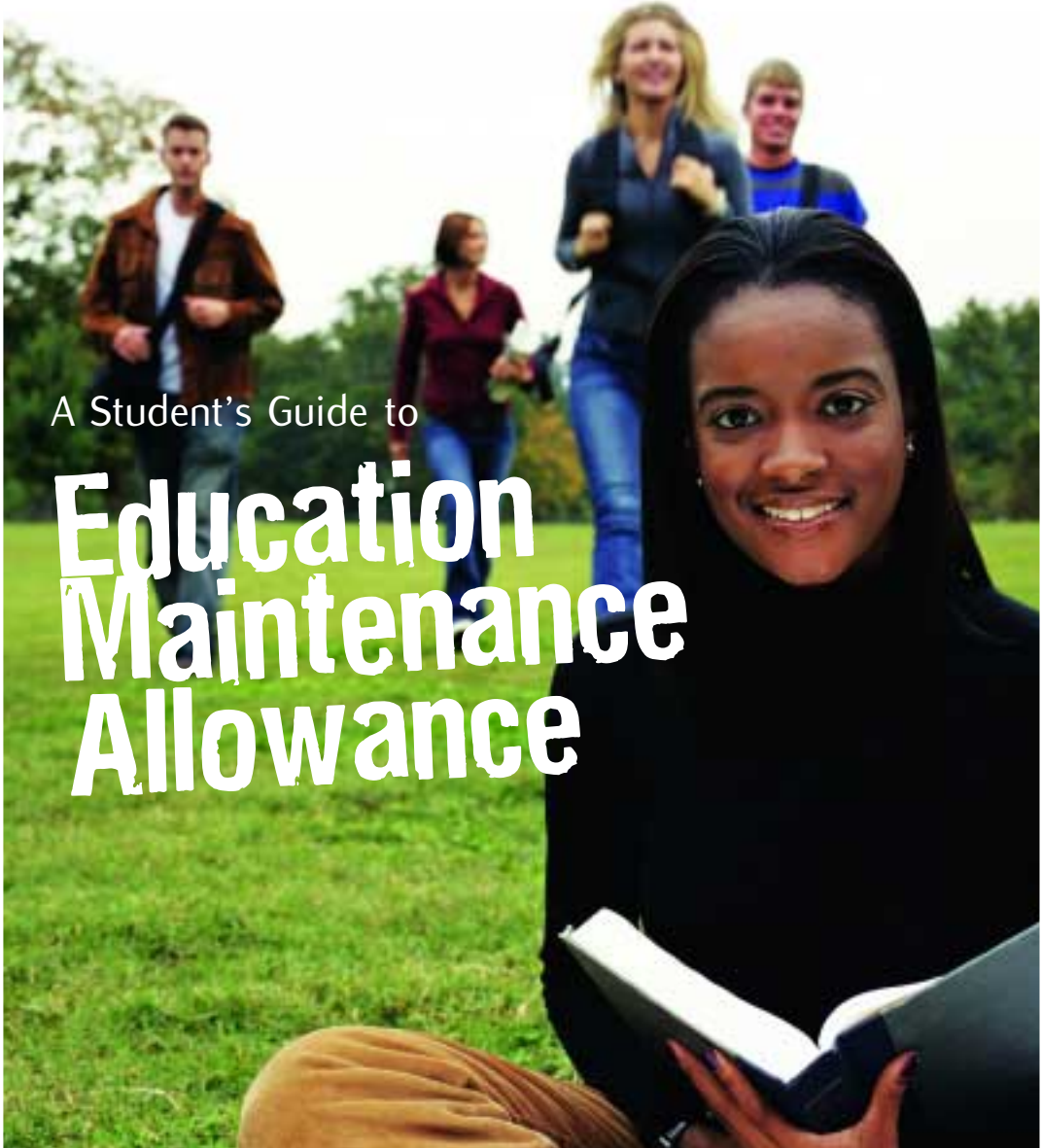




A Student's Guide to

Education Maintenance Allowance



Do you want to stay in education this September, but are worried about money?



If you decide to stay on at school or go to college from September 2004, you may be able to get Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA).

What is EMA?

It is a weekly payment worth up to £30 for eligible students who are in Y11 and planning to continue in further education from September 2004. The weekly payments are intended to help cover the day-to-day costs that you have to meet when you stay on at school or college, such as travel costs, books and equipment for your course.

There are also bonuses of £100 if you remain on your course and make good progress with your learning.

Payments will be made direct to your bank account so if you haven't got one already you will need to open one before applying for EMA. If you need help or advice on setting up a bank account talk to your parent or carer, or visit your local bank, who will be pleased to talk to you.

What are the key features of EMA?

- Weekly payment bands depending on household income.
 - up to £19,630 a year - £30 per week
 - £19,631 - £24,030 a year - £20 per week
 - £24,031 - £30,000 a year - £10 per week
- Bonus payments of £100 (worth up to £500 in total).
- Available for both academic and vocational courses.

Who will be entitled to EMA?

You may get EMA if:

- You are a UK national or:
 - you have been granted 'Indefinite Leave to Remain' or refugee status;
 - you are from a European Union or European Economic Area country and satisfy the 'Home Student' criteria. (www.homeoffice.gov.uk)
- You reach 16 years old between 1st September 2003 and 31st August 2004.
- Your household income is below £30,000 (you'll need to talk to your parents or carers about this – see next page).
- You are doing at least 12 hours of guided learning on further education courses in school sixth forms, sixth form colleges and FE colleges.
- In addition, young people aged 17 and over who live in the 56 areas that have already piloted EMA will also be able to apply.

For how long can I get EMA?

Most young people will get EMA for 2-3 years, depending on how long they need to complete their studies.

Will EMA affect my family's or my own benefits?

Not usually. EMA is paid on top of other support and benefits provided by the Government. So your family won't lose out on other money if you get EMA. For example it will not affect your parents' or carers' Child Benefit.

EMA won't affect any money you earn from a part-time job. Also any Housing Benefit you receive in your own right will not be affected.

“EMA has given me extra support to get through my A levels at school and helped me to focus on studying rather than trying to find a part-time job. It means that I didn't have to rely so much on my parents to fork out money – and it has made things easier for the whole family. I would certainly recommend other students to apply.”

Mohammed, aged 17, Tower Hamlets.

What do I need to do to get EMA?

You have to apply for EMA on an application form. This will ask parents/carers to give details of all the income coming into your household. You need to send your application form to the Assessment and Payment Body – details of how to do this can be found within the application form.

You do not need to know exactly what you want to study or where you want to study, when you apply for EMA. You should, however, provide evidence that you have set up a bank account (for example, a copy of your latest bank statement).

If you are eligible for EMA you will receive a Notice of Entitlement which explains how much you could get once you have enrolled on a course and started attending school or college.



Once you enrol, you must sign an EMA Contract with your school or college and attend all your course sessions. This contract will set out what is expected of you in terms of:

- attendance
- coursework
- progress.

What information do my parent(s) or carer(s) need in order to complete my EMA application?

We will need evidence of your household income for the last complete tax year. Many families will have already given this information to the Inland Revenue when their Tax Credits are reviewed in April 2004. This means that for many EMA applications, the only evidence of income your parents or carers will need to provide is their Tax Credit Award Notice (TCAN).

If your parents or carers have not applied for a Tax Credit they should apply for one now – they can contact the Inland Revenue on 0845 3003900 for further details.

If your parent(s) or carer(s) do not have an up-to-date TCAN they can send evidence of income (such as a P60 for the last

complete tax year) along with your application form to the Assessment and Payment Body (APB), who will do an assessment for EMA.



Whose income is assessed and how does it work?

We will assess the income of the adults in your home who have a caring/parental responsibility for you. In most cases this will be your parent(s), but in some cases this will be your grandparent(s), an older brother or sister or another family member.

Not all income will be counted. For example, if your parents no longer live together, any maintenance paid by the non-resident parent will not be counted.

“It has been hard for my mother to support me and my 3 brothers so getting EMA has helped me to contribute to the family income. I get the full £30 per week and give my mum £20, which means I have £10 to spend on things I need for my course”.

Sofia, aged 16, Leeds.

Where can I get further information and an application form?

Further information on how to apply will be available before you finish Year 11 from your school, your Connexions personal adviser, or your new school or college.

From April 2004 you will be able to pick up an application pack from your school and a number of other places in your area. If you have trouble finding a form you can telephone the helpline free on 080 810 16 2 19.

Apply early - if you apply late you may have to wait for your money.

Remember, you can ask any of the following about EMA:

- your careers teacher
- your local student support services
- your Connexions personal adviser
- free helpline for young people and parents 080 810 16 2 19
- website: www.ema.dfes.gov.uk

“At 15 I became pregnant and missed a lot of schooling. When my baby was about six months old, I joined a college course which offered crèche facilities. EMA made a real difference and helped me to pay for the things I needed for my course, things like bus fares, books and pens”.

Karen, aged 16, Nottingham.

Where can I get further information?

free helpline* for young people and parents

080 810 16 2 19

website: www.ema.dfes.gov.uk

You can get more copies of this leaflet from:

Department for Education and Skills Publications

PO Box 5050

Sherwood Park

Annesley

Nottingham NG15 0DJ

Tel: 0845 60 222 60

Fax: 0845 60 333 60

Minicom: 0845 60 555 60

Email: dfes@prolog.uk.com

Please quote ref: DfES0782/2003

You can also get copies of this leaflet in Braille and large print and in Somali, Hindi, Vietnamese, Bengali, Gujerati, Urdu, Punjabi, Cantonese, Arabic, Greek and Turkish by calling 0845 60 222 60.

© Crown Copyright 2004

PPSPG/OLDo40007/0504/16

department for

education and skills

creating opportunity, releasing potential, achieving excellence

*some mobile phone operators may charge you for your call