

## Education maintenance allowance AY 2016-17

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Summary: This guidance sets out the education maintenance allowance (EMA) programme for AY 2016-17.

FAO: Principals and directors of Scotland's colleges

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## Education maintenance allowance AY 2016-17

### Introduction

1. This guidance describes the education maintenance allowance (EMA) programme for academic year (AY) 2016-17. This publication builds on existing guidance published both by Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and Scottish Government.

### Background

2. The EMA programme aims to provide a financial incentive to young people from low-income households to remain in full-time education beyond the minimum school leaving age. This programme is available on the same terms to students who remain in school and to those who go to college.
3. Within the Scottish college sector, SFC manages the programme on behalf of the Scottish Government.
4. SFC acts as the agent of the Scottish Government under a separate agreement from its other activities. EMA funds do not form part of the grant-in-aid to SFC. The programme is subject to separate regulations from other student support funds and there are separate reporting requirements for both colleges and SFC.

### EMA programme

5. The EMA programme provides a weekly term time allowance for students aged 16-19 years old from low income households who are at college studying either:
  - Full-time, non-advanced courses.
  - Part-time, non-advanced courses.
6. The household income of the young person will determine their eligibility for an EMA. Colleges are reminded that the income thresholds were increased from 1 January 2016 as explained in our [EMA Guidance](#).
7. For both the full-time and part-time EMAs there is a single award available of £30 per week. Once students have been assessed and deemed to meet the requirements, they will be eligible for this payment. Full details of the application assessment process are available in Part 2 of the Guidance and Process document, published on our website alongside this guidance.
8. This payment is dependent upon 100% attendance and progress towards and

agreed learning targets. Colleges are reminded that authorised absences are permitted and that they may exercise flexibility when considering the attendance criteria for vulnerable students. Detailed guidance on attendance is set out in Section 1 and in Annex H of the Guidance and Process document.

9. These funds are available to all college sector bodies funded by SFC, with the following exceptions:
  - Shetland and Orkney colleges will receive payments from and report to their respective local authorities for EMAs.
  - Sabhal Mòr Ostaig does not currently have any relevant activity for EMAs.

### **Policies and guidance**

10. The EMA Scotland Guidance and Processes document govern the use of EMA funds. This document is prepared and updated regularly by the Scottish Government, with input from SFC, colleges, local authorities and schools.
11. The Scottish Government has published the final version for AY 2016-17 and this document is available for download on our website alongside this guidance.
12. The terms of these documents cover both the school and college sectors to ensure consistency across Scotland.
13. For 2016-17, this guidance covers both full-time and part-time EMA provision. In 2015-16, the EMA scheme was extended to cover part-time students and separate guidance on [part-time EMAs](#) was issued in November 2015. Colleges are reminded that, for students to be eligible for a part-time EMA, they should:
  - Be on a course that is eligible for SFC funding, as detailed in [SFC's Credit Guidance](#).
  - Be on a course that leads to a recognised qualification, meets an employer need or is a formal access course. Students on leisure courses and taster courses are not eligible for SFC funding or an EMA. Students on evening or weekend courses may be eligible for a part-time EMA but only where they meet the above criteria and where their attendance on the course is monitored.
  - Be on a course with a duration which is less than the full-time definition. The minimum course duration is 1 hour.
  - Be claiming an EMA from one source and for one course only. Colleges are asked to make explicit to students when they apply that they should not claim an EMA for more than one course at a time, or at more than one college or at a school and a college simultaneously. Colleges should also inform students that SFC monitors enrolments to identify students making

dual claims. If students are found to be making dual claims, they will be liable to repay any EMA that is over-claimed to the college. Colleges should have systems in place to recover this money from students under these circumstances.

- Students claiming part-time EMAs are not eligible for travel or study costs.
14. Criteria for the residential eligibility for EMA in colleges have changed and are set out in the *Education (Access Funds) (Scotland) Determination 2016*, which can be found in Annex A of the Guidance and Processes document.
  15. Please note that this Direction and Determination is independent of the legislation that underpins the other student support guidance.
  16. Colleges are reminded that Scottish domiciled students studying in the rest of the UK are not eligible for EMA. Similarly, under the revised regulations, students domiciled in England, Wales or Northern Ireland but studying in Scotland are not eligible for EMA in Scotland.

#### **Changes to the guidance for AY 2016-17 – payment process**

17. The main changes to the guidance for AY 2016-17 will affect the payment process for Incorporated Colleges starting from August 2016.
18. Following the ONS reclassification of colleges we changed the EMA payment process so that colleges' EMA payments were triggered by the payment profile returned to our Finance team. However, this change has led to a mis-match between the money being drawn down by colleges and the information on funds paid to students returned through [EMA online](#).
19. Following a review of the EMA payment system, SFC has decided to revert to making payments to colleges based on the information returned by colleges though EMA online which confirms the funds paid by the colleges to students.
20. This change will streamline the EMA process. However, it will also mean that the colleges will receive EMA payments in arrears. In order to alleviate this payment delay we will make an upfront payment to colleges in August 2016 and these funds will be recovered by offsetting against payments to the colleges towards the end of the academic year. Details of the upfront funds to be paid to colleges are shown in Annex A to this paper and the process timetable for the EMAs is set out in Annex B. In addition, any balances brought forward from the previous academic year (2015-16) will be adjusted against payments made to colleges at the beginning of academic year 2016-17.
21. This change will mean that the funds drawn down from the Scottish Government will be equal to the funds paid to the students and not an estimated figure.

22. There will be no change to the payment process for SRUC or Newbattle Abbey College.

### **Administrative costs**

23. A college can claim funds for administration costs. Two different types of payments for administrative costs will be made to colleges each year.
24. A flat-rate payment of £8,000 is paid to all colleges participating in the programme in May 2017.
25. A further payment of £15 per accepted EMA student will be paid after student totals have been received in the data returns that are submitted twice in the year. For these payments of administrative costs, signed colleges should submit claims mirroring the data return (see paragraphs 37-40).
26. The EMA administrative funds are ring-fenced for EMA related expenses and colleges should be able to demonstrate evidence of spend against their allocation. The Scottish Government is seeking additional information from colleges during AY 2016-17 relating the use of these admin funds, see paragraphs 48-49 for more information.

### **Authorised signatures**

27. Returns claiming funds must be signed by a relevant authorised signatory before being sent to SFC. This signatory will normally be the Principal/Chief Executive Officer or a nominated deputy. Colleges are required to complete and return the pro-forma response (Annex C, part 2) giving an update of the details of authorised signatories, by 25 July 2016. There can be up to four separate signatories. If you would like to amend these signatories at any point please contact Jane Scott in SFC's Finance Team (contact details available at the end of this document).
28. As the year-end statement is a declaration of the college's spend within the academic year, it must be agreed and signed by the Principal / Chief Executive Officer. Colleges should refer to the data forms and associated guidance for more detailed information about the timing of returns on [EMA online](#).
29. Each college has its own log-in details for this system.
30. Any additions or changes to authorised signatories should be notified to SFC as soon as possible.

### **Conditions of grant**

31. EMA funding for colleges has specific conditions as set out below.

## **General**

32. Colleges should make it clear to students that they cannot claim an EMA for more than one course at a time, or at more than one college or at a school and a college simultaneously.
33. Colleges should ensure that students sign a declaration agreeing that the college can recover any overpayment of EMA funds.
34. SFC will recover any overpayment of EMA funds from colleges at the earliest opportunity.
35. Colleges are required to comply with the Education (Access Funds) (Scotland) Determination 2016, the EMA Scotland Business Model, National Guidance and other policy documents and updates as issued by SFC and / or the Scottish Government in operating the EMA programme.

## **Use of funds**

36. EMA funds, for both student and college costs, are ring-fenced and should only be used for the purpose for which they are allocated within the EMA programme.

## **Data returns and quality**

37. Monthly data returns should be sent to SFC in good time (see Annex B for process timetable) as no ad-hoc payments will be made outside the monthly payment schedule. Therefore, colleges that delay making their returns and / or claims may not receive a payment until the following payment run.
38. Colleges are also required to agree and sign-off an academic year-end data return. The data return will include the information for the full academic year and will be issued by SFC in September.
39. It is the college's responsibility to ensure that data is submitted on time and quality requirements are met. Any delay and subsequent non-payment by SFC for a particular month must not lead to students being disadvantaged.
40. Detailed information on the specific data requirements and processes is available on [EMA online](#).
41. Colleges may also wish to refer to the Guidance and Processes document.

## **Audit requirements**

42. EMAs will require a separate audit and the audit cycle is on an academic year basis.

43. Colleges are required to agree and sign the academic year-end statement.
44. Audit requirements are set out in the EMA Guidance and Processes document. Colleges should note that the audit should include evidence that spot checks have been carried out on 5% of EMA applications and payments.
45. An audited year-end statement for the period August 2016 to July 2017 should be sent to SFC by 31 October 2017.
46. Further information on audit procedures and timing for 2016-17 will be contained in the forthcoming audit guidance due to be published summer 2016.

### **Acceptance of grant**

47. Colleges are asked to return a complete and signed copy of the funding offer pro-forma (Annex C, parts 1 and 2) by 25 July 2016 to indicate they accept the offer of EMA funds and the conditions attached to them. Colleges should retain a signed completed copy of these documents for their records.

### **Additional information required by Scottish Government for 2016-17**

48. This year, the Scottish Government are seeking additional information from colleges on the following issues:
  - Number of provisional awards made to students.
  - Details of how colleges use the admin funds they receive in the year.
49. Copies of the forms to be completed can be found at Annexes D & E. The returns are also scheduled in the timetable at Annex B. They are due to be returned to Scottish Government in April 2017. SFC will co-ordinate the college responses and send them collectively to the Scottish Government. We will issue a reminder in March 2017.

### **Further information**

50. Please contact Jane Scott, Funding Policy Officer for further information, tel: 0131 313 6660, email: [jscott@sfc.ac.uk](mailto:jscott@sfc.ac.uk).



**Martin Smith**  
Chief Funding & Information Officer

## Annex A

### EMA upfront payments to colleges

Region	College	Up-front Payment 2016-17
Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire	North East Scotland College	£42,657
Ayrshire	Ayrshire College	£117,423
Borders	Borders College	£21,450
Central	Forth Valley College	£34,161
Dumfries and Galloway	Dumfries and Galloway College	£46,980
Edinburgh	Edinburgh College	£123,789
Fife	Fife College	£161,520
Glasgow	City of Glasgow College	£63,036
	Glasgow Clyde College	£79,326
	Glasgow Kelvin College	£42,315
Highlands and Islands	Inverness College UHI	£18,144
	Lewis Castle College UHI	£3,450
	Moray College UHI	£19,998
	Perth College UHI	£39,456
	North Highland College UHI	£18,876
Lanarkshire	New College Lanarkshire	£175,410
	South Lanarkshire College	£32,019
Tayside	Dundee & Angus College	£79,386
West	West College Scotland	£113,775
West Lothian	West Lothian College	£57,921
SRUC	SRUC	£29,781
	Newbattle Abbey College	£600
<b>Total</b>		<b>£1,321,473</b>

#### Note:

The upfront payment for AY 2016-17 has been calculated using the maintenance information from EMA online.

We have used the maintenance paid to students from July 2014 to March 2016 and divided this by 20 (the number of months for this period) to calculate the average monthly payment. We have then multiplied this by 2 to provide an estimate of the upfront funding required by the colleges to cover the first two months of the academic year.



## Annex B

### Payment of EMA funds to all colleges

1. The payment dates for AY 2016-17 are set out in the table below. Colleges should complete EMA online returns for each month, and these should be with us within the allotted time. Failure to make the return in time sets the risk of non-payment of funds (see paragraphs 37-40 of the main document for information on the monthly online returns). Colleges can email scanned copies of the signed return to [EMAreturns@sfc.ac.uk](mailto:EMAreturns@sfc.ac.uk).
2. College claims for EMA payments to students will be made in arrears.

### *Payment schedule*

3. The schedule detailing payment and data return dates is set out in the table below. This is based on the turnaround time for data and payments as set out in the EMA Scotland Business Model and to fit with SFC's standard monthly payment schedule.

<b>Timetable of EMA returns and payments between all colleges and SFC, AY 2016-17</b>				
<b>Description</b>	<b>Month end date</b>	<b>Monthly return due to SFC (EMA online)</b>	<b>Payment to College from SFC</b>	<b>Notes</b>
August claim payment	26/08/16	2/09/16	14/10/16	Upfront payment to colleges.
September claim payment	30/09/16	7/10/16	14/11/16	
October claim payment	28/10/16	4/11/16	14/12/16	
November claim payment	25/11/16	4/12/16	16/01/17	
December claim payment	30/12/16	06/01/17	14/02/17	
January claim payment	29/01/17	03/02/17	14/03/17	
February claim payment	24/02/17	03/03/17	18/04/17**	
February head count (biannual data) return	24/02/17	03/03/17	18/04/17	Payment on receipt of first head count (biannual data) return with student numbers*. Paid for student registrations from August to December.
March claim payment	31/03/17	07/04/17	15/05/17	

<b>Timetable of EMA returns and payments between all colleges and SFC, AY 2016-17</b>				
<b>Description</b>	<b>Month end date</b>	<b>Monthly return due to SFC (EMA online)</b>	<b>Payment to College from SFC</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Main admin payment to college	N/A	N/A	15/05/17	
April claim payment	28/04/17	05/05/17	14/06/17	Clawback of upfront payment will commence.
Return information for SG		05/05/17		Provisional award information & breakdown of use of admin fees returns due.
May claim payment	26/05/17	02/06/17	14/07/17	Clawback of upfront payment.
June claim payment	30/06/17	07/07/17	14/08/17 **	Clawback of upfront payment if required.
July claim payment	28/07/17	04/08/17	14/09/17 **	
July head count (biannual data) return and administration payment	31/08/17	04/08/17	14/09/17	Payment on receipt of second head count (biannual data) return with student numbers.  Paid for student registrations from January onwards
AY-end data return to be signed off by college	30/10/17			Data return to be signed off by College Principal and returned to SFC with College Audit Certificate and should include 5% spotchecks carried out by college.

\* Please note that the data return will be kept open for student numbers only until the February claim is due, to allow colleges to reflect as accurate numbers as possible at this time.

\*\*Please note that these dates may be subject to change.

**EMA funding offer, pro-forma response (Part 1)**

***To be received by the Scottish Funding Council no later than 25 July 2016***

**Acceptance of EMA conditions of Grant**

College name

.....

I agree to the EMA conditions of grant for August 2016 – July 2017, as set out in the Scottish Funding Council’s education maintenance allowances grant letter 2016-17. I note that as part of these conditions, I have already received payment of administration costs for EMAs, which will be used for EMA related expenditure only.

Signed

.....

Principal / Chief Executive Officer (or principal designate or equivalent)

.....

Name (please print)

.....

Position

Date.....

**Please return by 25 July 2016 to:**

**Jane Scott, Policy Officer, Scottish Funding Council, Apex 2, 97 Haymarket Terrace,  
Edinburgh EH12 5HD**

**Annex C (part 2)**

**EMA funding offer, pro-forma (Part 2)**

***To be received by the Scottish Funding Council no later than 25 July 2016***

EMA claims and payments – authorised signatories for 2016-17 onwards.

The following are authorised to claim EMA funds from SFC on behalf of

..... (College name) from 1 August 2016

Please inform SFC of any changes to these signatories as soon as possible.

**Authorised signatories for claims:**

**Name:**

**Name:**

**Position:**

Principal / Chief Executive Officer

**Position:**

Vice Principal / Director of Finance

**Signature:**

**Signature:**

**Date:**

**Date:**

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**Name:**

**Name:**

**Position:**

**Position:**

**Signature:**

**Signature:**

**Date:**

**Date:**

**Please return by 25 July 2016 to: Jane Scott, Policy Officer, Scottish Funding Council, Apex 2, 97 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh, EH12 5HD**

**Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs)**

***Provisional Award Data 2016-17***

Name of College: .....

The Grantee should provide data on Provisional Awards for financial year 2016-17 to Scottish Government by 15 April 2017 as outlined in paragraph 2.6 of the EMA Scotland Guidance and Processes document.

	Number of provisional awards paid	Number of provisional awards finalised	Number of provisional awards ongoing	Number of provisional awards stopped	Total of provisional awards stopped (£)	Number stopped due to confirmed income over threshold	Number stopped due to income confirmation not received	Number stopped due to leaving college	Number stopped due to other reasons
Total					£				

I certify that the entries on this form are fairly stated, and the payments on which they are based have been properly incurred in accordance with the EMA (Scotland) Guidance and Processes.

Signed .....  
Director of Finance

Dated .....

Position .....

Please return by 5 April 2017 to: Jane Scott, Policy Officer, Scottish Funding Council, Apex 2, 97 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh, EH12 5HD or email to [EMAreturns@sfc.ac.uk](mailto:EMAreturns@sfc.ac.uk)

**Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAS)**

***Yearly Administration Breakdown 2016-17***

Name of college: .....

The Grantee should provide a breakdown of spend against the £ ..... administration allowance for financial year 2016-17 as outlined in paragraph 2.6 of the of the EMA Scotland Guidance and Processes document.

<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Spend (£)</b>
Printing costs for application forms / leaflets / posters etc	
Promotion costs of EMA (please specify below how EMA was promoted)	
Website update costs	
Staff costs	
Other costs (please specify)	
<b>Total</b>	

I certify that the entries on this form are fairly stated, and the payments on which they are based have been properly incurred.

Signed .....  
Director of Finance

Dated .....

Position .....

Please return by 5 April 2017 to: Jane Scott, Policy Officer, Scottish Funding Council, Apex 2, 97 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh, EH12 5HD or email to [EMAreturns@sfc.ac.uk](mailto:EMAreturns@sfc.ac.uk)