

Are you ready for the EMA extension?

With less than a month to go, read EMA Extension Update to ensure you're set for 10 April.

Activity has been building as the extension of Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) to LSC-funded E2E programmes and courses which lead to an Apprenticeship approaches. We'd like to thank all parties involved, particularly providers of LSC-funded E2E programmes and/or courses which lead to an Apprenticeship and LSC local offices. All have been working incredibly hard and have adopted a collaborative approach to ensure they are ready for the EMA extension.

You may have seen our 'spy' themed TV advertising campaign which has been running over the past month. The ads are part of our extensive marketing and PR campaign, which kicked off last month, to raise awareness of EMA and the extension among young people, parents and carers. You can download the spy themed promotional leaflets and posters from www.direct.gov.uk/ema.

We have also started communicating with schools as they have a vital role in raising awareness of EMA among young people and potentially supporting them through the application process. Read on for further details about this activity.

With the extension fast approaching, many of you have asked us to provide more information about benefits. As such, you will shortly receive an EMA Extension Benefits Special that we hope will answer your questions.

We continue to welcome questions and comments relating to the EMA extension – you can reach us on emaextension@lsc.gov.uk.

All the best for 10 April!

Greg Burke, Head of EMA Unit

EMA Extension Update

March 2006

Of interest to work-based learning providers, local LSCs and anyone else interested in delivering EMA

Applying for EMA

A user-friendly 'Application Form Resource Pack' has been produced to help practitioners understand all aspects of the EMA application form so they, in turn, can help young people apply.

Following consultation with key partners and local LSC colleagues, the pack includes: details of which form should be completed; a 'walkthrough' of the application form explaining all the questions in detail; information on the forms of evidence required and what practitioners should be verifying; and, insight into the top reasons why application forms are returned. The Application Form Resource Pack can now be downloaded from www.direct.gov.uk/ema (Click: Involved in delivering EMA/Resources for download/EMA Application Form Resource Pack).

Just for information, learning providers can expect to receive a supply of 2005/2006 EMA application forms (orange in colour) over the next couple of weeks. Supplies of 2006/2007 EMA application forms (green in colour) will be sent to learning providers early summer. The Application Form Resource Pack, outlined above, explains which colour form should be completed depending on when the young person left school and when they are due to start their course. For more information on EMA application forms, learning providers can call the helpline on **0808 10 16219**.

In the schools' diary

Communicating with schools is key to ensuring that teachers understand EMA, know about the forthcoming extension and are equipped with the materials they need to promote the initiative to young people.

As such the EMA Unit has informed schools and teachers how to access publicity materials and EMA application forms.

The EMA Unit has also drafted and issued a briefing note to a wide range of specialist media which reaches school governors, head teachers and teachers. The target media ranges from print publications, newsletters and email updates to news sections on websites.

Teacher organisations that have been contacted by the EMA Unit with information relating to the extension include the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL), Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL), National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) and National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT).

In addition, information on the EMA extension is being made available at the forthcoming ASCL annual conference on 17 March.

Administration funding payment

Providers of LSC-funded E2E programmes and/or courses which lead to an Apprenticeship with 10 or more learners will receive a payment of £70 for each EMA eligible learner.

This administration funding payment reflects the impact of the extension of EMA to these providers and is a contribution towards administration costs for the scheme. As such, the funding is to be spent on delivering and improving administrative processes for EMA to meet the Assessment and Payment Body's (APB) payment reporting criteria.

Administration payments for 2006-2007 will be made automatically to learning providers and will be based on the number of enrolled EMA learners registered on the APB system on 1 November 2006.

This date has been chosen in consultation with a range of stakeholders, including the Association of Learning Providers (ALP), so as to give the most accurate reflection of the numbers participating on these learning programmes over the entire year.

Arrangements on administration funding in forthcoming years will be reviewed on an annual basis.

EMASYS training: feedback from learning providers

Since January this year, the Assessment and Payment Body (APB) has conducted almost 60 EMASYS training seminars and trained over 1200 work-based learning provider staff on how to use the web-based payment system.

The feedback from the seminars was very positive and the evaluation indicates that providers found the seminars highly beneficial and are now fully prepared for EMASYS implementation from April 10.

We trust providers are finding the EMASYS Training Pack a useful resource both in terms of reinforcing knowledge from the seminars and in cascading information internally. In addition, Super users will receive a unique password from the APB at the beginning of April which will provide access to the EMASYS Training website.

EMA Q and A

Where can I find out about the LSC audit requirements for the administration of the extension of EMA to LSC-funded E2E programmes and courses which lead to an Apprenticeship?

Guidance which updates providers on proposals for LSC audit arrangements will be available at the end of this month from www.direct.gov.uk/ema.

How will household income be assessed if the family has more than one young person applying for EMA?

The income assessment does not factor in the number of siblings that a household contains. Therefore, the way the household income is assessed is exactly the same, using P60/TCAN evidence, whether there is one or more young person applying.

Will household income include other siblings' pay?

As part of the EMA application process, details need to be provided of the household income of the one or two adults who are mainly responsible for the young person. Sibling pay is not included in the household income, unless the sibling is the adult who is mainly responsible for the young person.

Do young people have to learn for a 'week-in-hand' before they get EMA payment?

To receive EMA, learners must accept and fulfil specific attendance and coursework requirements, meaning it's a 'something for something' payment to reward commitment and development. Therefore, EMA is paid retrospectively to young people.

If a learner moves provider, can we track what bonus payments have been issued to the learner?

EMASYS, the web-based payment system, will not provide details of previous bonus payments in cases where a learner moves provider. In this case, the new provider would need to liaise with the previous provider to find out what bonus payments have been made.

I haven't attended an EMASYS training session. Will I still be able to access the system?

Only learning providers that have a contract with LSC will be authorised to use EMASYS, so if you work for a sub-contracted organisation, you won't need to know how to operate it. If your organisation is contracted to the LSC, and you have not attended EMASYS training, please contact the EMA partner helpline on **0800 056 2811**.

Can you provide clarification on the issue of part-time work and the extension of EMA to learners on E2E programmes and courses which lead to an Apprenticeship?

The introduction of the extension of EMA to E2E programmes and courses which lead to an Apprenticeship has not changed existing Work Based Learning policy outlined in the *Requirements for funding Work Based Learning for Young People 2005/06*. Learners will usually attend a courses which lead to an Apprenticeship for a minimum of 30 hours a week.

In exceptional circumstances part-time attendance can be agreed, but with the expectation that the learner would progress to full time attendance as soon as they were able.

Learners on courses which lead to an Apprenticeship in receipt of EMA would be able to complete up to 24 hours of part-time work in a week before their benefit entitlement was affected. E2E learners are able to undertake part-time employment, which is not part of E2E, but this should not initially exceed more than 10 hours a week as it is expected that an E2E learner who can work for longer than this would be ready to progress from E2E to a positive destination. Therefore an individual's benefit entitlement under EMA would be unaffected.

However, learners in receipt of EMA and Income Support (IS) would need to consider that the level of IS awarded is reduced by the level of income generated from any such part-time work.

Can a learner on a course which leads to an Apprenticeship in receipt of EMA be employed part-time with the same employer that they are with for their Apprenticeship?

A course which leads to an Apprenticeship is a full time programme of 30 hours per week. It is designed to give young people a short period of training, either in a training centre or with an employer, to equip them with the skills they need to begin a paid Apprenticeship.

The LSCs expectation is that it would generally expect learners to become a paid Apprentice as soon as they were able, having developed the required skills. If a learning provider becomes aware that a young person in receipt of EMA has been offered part-time employment with the same employer then it would be the responsibility of the provider to negotiate progression to a paid apprenticeship as soon as possible based on this fact.

Your guide to the EMA extension

All learning providers involved in delivering LSC-funded E2E programmes and/or courses which lead to an Apprenticeship can find detailed information on what they should do to operate the EMA scheme in the 2005-2006 EMA Extension Guidance.

Remember to download your copy from
www.direct.gov.uk/ema

EMA Extension Update is published monthly and is available online. It can be downloaded from our website (www.lsc.gov.uk) through the Documents section of our national home page by selecting Series on the menu bar.

We value your views, so please let us have your comments on the content and style, or any ideas on how you think we could improve LSC Extension Update at emaextension@lsc.gov.uk

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