

From mountain to sea

Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) 2026-27

Aberdeenshire Student Guidance

(Please note full guidance is available at <https://www.mygov.scot/ema>)

Please note you need to complete a new application form and Learning Agreement every academic session.

Am I eligible?

- If you are 16 years of age or over before 30 September 2026, you may be eligible for an EMA from the beginning of the August school term.
- If you are 16 years of age after the 1 October 2026 and before 28 February 2027, you may be eligible for an EMA from January 2027.
- If you are eligible for a full academic year award, your application must be submitted by 30 September 2026, if not the award **can only** be made from the date it is received by this office. You can still apply up to 31 March 2027, but you will not be back dated.
- If you are eligible for an award from January 2027, your application must be submitted by 28 February 2027, if not the award **can only** be made from the date it is received by this office. You can still apply up to the 31 March 2027.

What level of income do I need to become eligible?

- Household income is normally assessed on gross taxable household income for the period April 2025 to April 2026.

Income	No of dependent children in household	Award
Up to £24,421	1	£30
Up to £26,884	2+	£30

NOTE: Dependent children are all those up to the age of 16 and those over the age of 16 and up to the age 25 if they are in full time Further or Higher Education, proof required

What might I need to provide?

- Under School Age or Attending School – Birth Certificate, Child Benefit, Tax Credit Award Notice (TCAN) or Universal Credit Letter
- Attending College/University – SAAS Award Letter or College/Uni Acceptance Letter



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- Employed/Unemployed – no evidence required unless you do not receive the 25% Council Tax Discount

Residency

Have you come to live in the United Kingdom in the last 3 years. If yes, please complete the section below and provide evidence

- EU/EEA/Swiss National
- Refugee/Temporary Protection/Humanitarian Protection
- Settled Status/Exceptional Leave to Enter/Remain
- Other (please specify)

You can view your status online, via the 'view and prove your immigration status' service: www.gov.uk/view-prove-immigration-status. This online service provides a secure record of your immigration status which is held digitally by the Home Office and is always available to you.

Please visit <https://www.gov.uk/view-prove-immigration-status> and send us the share code which can be used to prove status.

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What if I am Home Educated?

- Home Educated applicants will have to complete and submit further information (in respect of a Learning Agreement Declaration, a Notification of Home Education form and appropriate documentation as evidence of a history of home education), for their EMA application to be processed. This will be advised once your completed EMA application form has been received.
- Please note: some of the sections of the application form may not apply to home-educated students (i.e. references to school). Please complete all relevant sections as far as possible. Where asked to enter school details, please enter "Home Educated".

School Holidays

- You will not receive any payments for school holidays.

Study Leave

- Your EMA will be paid whilst you are on study leave. S5 pupils will be paid to the end of the school year and S6 pupils will be paid until the date of their final SQA exam. S5 pupils must maintain 100% attendance until the end of the school year to receive their payments.

ADDITIONAL STUDENT INFORMATION REGARDING INCOME & PAYMENTS

Evidence of Household Income to Provide. Please provide these by email. If this is not possible, please contact us.

- If you are in employment a P60 for year-end April 2026 will be suitable or a month 12/week 52 payslip showing the final pay to date.
- If you are on any benefits, please provide us with letters or certificates from April 2025 to April 2026.
- If you are in receipt of Universal Credit we require full statements for April 2025, December 2025 and March 2026 showing your monthly payment and the breakdown of how the monthly payment has been calculated. If there is take home pay included in your statement, please provide your March 2026 payslip or P60 for 2026 for us to obtain the gross take home pay
- If you have a Tax Credit form (TCAN) from HMRC which shows your actual income for 2025-26 this will be sufficient.
- If you are a lone parent household, we will require proof of this, provide us with the Council Tax Bill showing the 25% reduction or a TCAN showing lone parent is on this.
- If you do not receive the 25% reduction due to an older sibling living in the house, please provide us with their birth certificate and any current paperwork to show they live at this address (we do not use their income).
- If you are self-employed, please provide us with an SA302 or end-of-year final tax assessment certificate from HMRC. Or if you have a current Tax Credit form showing actual income (**not estimated**) for 2025-26. If you are unable to provide an SA302 please contact us.

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- If you are in receipt of any pension/s, please provide paperwork.
- If you are an independent student living on your own, we require proof of situation either from the school or a social worker. Also provide us with any benefit letters you receive in your own right, such as Housing or ESA.
- If you are in Foster Care/ Kinship Care/ Local Authority Care or a Looked After Child, we will require a letter from your Social Worker to inform us of your situation, and we do not use the household income.
- If there has been a significant change in financial circumstances from one year to the next, please provide us with previous income and as much information regarding the current situation so we can assess the projected income for the future. A provisional payment could be paid and further assessments made during the year.

Learning Agreements

You agree to adhere to the terms and conditions of EMA, and you agree to meet the required standards of 100% attendance, timekeeping and behavior expected by your School. If you fail to maintain these standards, your EMA payments may be withheld.

You will not receive any EMA payments until your Learning Agreement has been signed by you, your parent(s)/guardian(s) and your School. The office submits the learning agreement to the school for this to be completed by them.

Bank Details

The bank details **must** be in the students' name **only** as they are applying for this award. If the account is in "another" name information must be provided, we only accept "another" when a student cannot hold their own bank account. We always contact the school attended for their advice on the information provided before a decision is made.

Payments and Backdated Payments

When we receive the learning agreement back from the school, your application form is considered complete: **complete means that we have received all the necessary documents and information to process your application.** When the application is complete, we will email you an acceptance letter, terms and conditions and a timetable of payments. Your payments will start after this and any back dated payments due to you will be with this payment. Your attendances are input by the schools, if you do not receive a payment and you think you should, please contact your school first.

PLEASE ENSURE YOU PROVIDE A CORRECT EMAIL ADDRESS FOR ALL CORRESPONDENCE.

The cut-off date for processing application forms for the academic year 2026-27 is 31 March 2027. **No applications will be accepted after this date.**

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact us on ema@aberdeenshire.gov.uk