October 2009

Of interest to all stakeholders and providers involved in delivering Education Maintenance Allowance

Learner Support Programme

EMA Valid Provision Criteria 2009/10

September 2009

Of interest to all stakeholders and providers involved in delivering Education Maintenance Allowance
Further information
Further information on the scheme is available from the following sources:

Learning Providers can contact the Learner Support Service for advice on administering the scheme on 0845 600 7979.

Learners should be directed to the learner support helpline on 0800 121 8989.

Alternatively the Learner Support Service can be contacted via email at ema@lsclearnersupport.co.uk.

Learner Support Directorate
Learning and Skills Council
(National Office)

The Straddle
Victoria Quays
Wharf Street
Sheffield S2 5SY

T 0845 019 4171
lsc.gov.uk
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Introduction

This document contains information on the valid provision criteria used to assess the eligibility of learning provision for Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) purposes. It has been produced to support providers to determine if learning provision meets the criteria and is therefore in scope for EMA. This document should be read in conjunction with the *Education Maintenance Allowance Provider Guidance 2009/10*.

This document is of interest to post-16 Learning Providers, LSC Area Partnership Teams, Connexions staff and other institutions involved in 16–19 provision.

Ian Pursglove  
Young People’s Learner Support Director

September 2009
Since November 2007 the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has trialled new criteria to assess learning provision for EMA purposes. The trial was announced by the Secretary of State as part of the strategy to reduce the proportion of 16- to 18-year-olds not in education, employment or training (NEET).

The LSC worked with the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) to develop a new set of eligibility criteria which would result in EMA being paid to a wider range of learners, and which would include courses designed to reach out and help those who are NEET, therefore ensuring that more learners would be financially supported.

Following an evaluation of this trial to measure the impact of the new eligibility criteria, the decision has been taken that the trial criteria should be adopted for all new provision attracting EMA.
EMAv valid provision criteria

In order for a learning programme to be considered valid for the purposes of EMA, it must meet the following criteria:

a. the provision is inspected by a public body that assures quality (e.g. Ofsted, the Independent Schools Inspectorate);

and

b. the programme of study is not less than 12 guided learning hours a week for a minimum of 10 weeks;

and

c. it must meet one of the following criteria:

(i) be funded or co-financed by the LSC in England/Young People’s Learning Agency (YPLA) through local authorities;

or

(ii) leads to a qualification (up to Level 3) that is accredited by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority pursuant to Section 24 of the Education Act 1997;

or

(iii) leads to a qualification (up to Level 3) that is approved by the Secretary of State pursuant to Section 98 (this includes Sections 96 and 97) of the Learning and Skills Act 2000.

Valid learning programme

A valid learning programme for the purposes of EMA is:

- an LSC/YPLA-funded Entry to Employment (E2E) / Programme-led Apprenticeship (PLA) programme; or
- a non-advanced learning programme, up to and including Level 3.

Programme types available on the EMA Learner Assessment and Payment System (laps)

The laps system operates four EMA programme types:

- E2E – only LSC/YPLA-funded E2E programmes can access this model;
- PLA – only LSC/YPLA-funded PLA programmes can access this model;
- EMA further education (FE) – for courses that follow the standard academic year; and
- EMA short course FE – for courses that do not follow the standard academic year and are not E2E/PLA funded. An example would be an ESF-funded course that is over 10 weeks in duration but substantially shorter than an academic year.
Application process for new providers

- All new providers requesting to be set up with a link to laps should complete the 'Proforma to request a link to laps' and email it direct to lapsaccessrequests@lsc.gov.uk.
- A copy of the proforma can be found on our website ema.lsc.gov.uk/ema-guidance/supporting-documents-0910/.
- Where a non-LSC/YPLA-funded/co-financed provider (including learning programmes that are funded by a local authority) is seeking to administer EMA, the provider should include details of the provision to confirm it meets the criteria at a and b and the criteria at (ii) or (iii).
- In order to check that the qualifications meet the criteria at (ii) or (iii) the following links may be helpful.
  QCA accredited courses:
  ndaq.org.uk/AdvancedQualificationSearch.aspx
  Section 96:
  dfes.gov.uk/section96/search/search.cfm
  Section 97:
  dfes.gov.uk/section97/search/search.cfm
- All new applications received will be assessed and verified by the LSC and, if approved under the valid provision criteria, will be submitted to the Learner Support Service (LSS).
- Providers that do not meet the valid provision criteria will receive a notification by email.
- The LSS will contact those providers that have been approved for EMA purposes to set up the designated users on laps.
Support

If you require further help and support regarding the EMA scheme, please read the *Education Maintenance Allowance Provider Guidance 2009/10*. 