



QUALITY ASSURANCE

EDUCATIONAL MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE / ADULT LEARNING GRANT - Policy Ref: GSL/11/17

This Procedure relates to the above policy.

1. Process

Contract Part 1

- Guidance & Welfare Team to authorise Contract Part 1 for EMA, once a student has enrolled onto their chosen course (EMA only)

Contract Part 2

- During November students will be notified at their home address of the impending January Bonus Payment and completion by the parent and student of the Contract Part 2 EMA terms and conditions (EMA only).

Timesheets process

- Learning Coaches advise students that timesheets can be collected from Reception on production of their Student ID Card and advise that they need to be returned to Reception desk no later than Friday of that week, fully stamped for timely payment the following Friday.
- Timesheets input onto Capita system for processing of payments, if student not eligible for payment that week then letter will be sent to students home address notifying of non payment of EMA / ALG.
- Late submission of timesheets may result in delayed weekly payments.

2. Punctuality and Attendance

More detailed guidance can be found in the Student Attendance Policy and Procedure.

General Principles:

- Students are expected to attend all lessons, tutorial sessions and workshops as per their timetable
- Students must be punctual.
- Timesheets must be stamped at each session.
- Attendance at all sessions is compulsory.
- EMA / ALG will only be paid on proof of 100% attendance, unless absence has been authorised.

Authorised and unauthorised absences:

In deciding whether an absence should be authorised or not the College will take account of guidance provided by the LSC in line with the following general principles:

- The College will presume that any student absence should be considered as unauthorised unless there is a valid reason otherwise

- If the claimed reason for absence should have been foreseen the student should have applied for authorised absence in advance
- Where the claimed reason for absence could not have reasonably been foreseen the College will consider whether the absence was really unavoidable.

Absences which can be foreseen in advance

In deciding whether to authorise absences, College staff will take account of the following factors:

- how reasonable any case is
- the number of absences taken by any one individual
- repetitions of the same excuse
- whether the excuse is backed up with evidence

Examples of legitimate reasons for absence include:

- a medical appointment which cannot be arranged outside College hours;
- an urgent need to look after a family member or another person for whom the student has caring responsibilities;
NB: the LSC advise that the College should not regularly authorise absences for a student for this reason, but should explore solutions personally with the student. LSC recommend that a student with caring responsibilities is offered a named member of staff to contact if they are unable to attend and determine if alternative care arrangements can be made
- a religious holiday
- a visit to a University for an open day or for interview or a career related interview
- a work experience placement which is an integral part of the course and for which the student does not receive a wage
- participating in a significant extra-curricular activity, such as drama, music, sport or volunteering (e.g. taking part in a regional or national event)
- attendance at a probation meeting
- attendance at a funeral
- severe disruption to a student's mode of transport (e.g. as a result of industrial action where there is no practical way of getting to College)
- a driving test
- a College meeting for student representatives
- NUS official business
- approved study leave or examinations

Evidence must be provided to support any absences.

Appointments for the doctor/dentist etc during lesson time should be avoided unless it is an emergency. Emergency appointments must be confirmed by the parent / guardian on the reverse of the student's timesheet.

The following reasons for absence would not generally be acceptable:

- holidays or leisure activities
- part-time employment
- birthdays
- babysitting or driving lessons

Absences which cannot be foreseen in advance:

Where an absence could not be foreseen in advance the student should make arrangements to inform the College as soon as possible on the day in question that

he/she will be missing classes. Where a student fails to do this the absence will normally be treated as unauthorised absence. The only exception is where the young person can supply a strong reason why they failed to contact the College such as if an event had been particularly disturbing or there had been a genuine barrier.

Acceptable reasons for absence (if the College had been notified on the day) include:

- an emergency situation (such as sudden severe illness) involving a family member or another person for whom the student has caring responsibilities.
- Transport problems not known about in advance with no alternative means to hand.

Sickness Absence:

EMA/ ALG is intended to cover the costs incurred through attendance in learning, so it should not be paid if a student is absent due to illness. However, the student can appeal against a decision of non-payment and each case will be reviewed individually.

Long term sickness/ disability:

The College will consider what reasonable adjustments should be made to support disabled students in carrying out their programme and will normally class as authorised any absence which is directly related to the student's disability. In certain circumstances, a period of study at home may be authorised on condition that the College oversees any course work and monitors it's completion closely. If it becomes clear that the absence is going to be long term and that the student will not be able to complete 12 guided learning hours per week for a significant length of time, the College will consider whether it is reasonable to continue with EMA/ALG Payments.

The College may issue a general authorisation of absence in some circumstances – e.g. in the case of severe weather.

ALL unauthorised absences will result in a student losing their EMA / ALG. Continued absence will invoke the Student Disciplinary Procedure.

3. Learner's Effort and Behaviour for EMA

If a student is in receipt of EMA, the Learning Coach may decide to recommend non-payment of EMA that particular week for non-attendance, poor punctuality (3 or more lates within a week), or inappropriate behaviour. If this is the case, the Learning Coach must complete the EMA Non-payment Form (see attached) and discuss the case with the Welfare & Guidance Manager who will make the final decision regarding all non-payments. The Learning Coach must log this on the Online Learner Record.

4. Bonus Payments for EMA

Bonus payments will be processed if the criteria below has been achieved. Learning Coaches will liaise with tutors and other staff to ascertain whether the criteria has been met.

Learning Coaches can recommend delaying payment of EMA Bonuses. If this is the case, the Learning Coach must complete the EMA Bonus Delay Payment Form (see attached). This must be discussed with the student and targets for improvement must be set. The case must be discussed with the Welfare & Guidance Manager who will

approve the payment delay and specify a review date. The Learning Coach must log this on the Online Learner Record.

Progress:

- Students are expected to be organised and equipped for their lessons.
- Students are expected to work hard to meet deadlines.
- Students are expected to catch up with work missed due to absence, by an agreed date, set by the tutor.
- Work must be completed on time.

Behaviour:

- Course Tutors / Learning Coaches will outline acceptable levels of classroom behaviour during College Induction, and a copy of The Student Handbook will be issued containing the Student Behaviour Code.

Outside the Classroom:

- Students are expected to put all waste food in the bins provided.
- Students are expected to treat all furniture, fixtures and fittings with care.
- Students are expected to leave all areas clean and tidy after use.
- Smoking is prohibited on the college campus

Failure to meet the guidelines may result in non payment of the Education Maintenance Allowance.

5. Appeals

A student may appeal against any non-payment decision (including EMA Bonus), or if they feel that they have not been treated fairly and equitably.

In the first instance, contact the Welfare & Guidance Manager for a verbal explanation of the decision.

If still unhappy with the decision, a learner must put their appeal in **writing within 5 working days** from the receipt of the non-payment notification letter. This letter should be marked for the attention of the Director of Learner and Learning Services. A review of the appeal and a final decision will be sent to the learner's home address within 7 working days.

6. EMA / ALG Records & Administration

Guidance is issued in the LSC documents "Learner Support Programme Educational Maintenance Allowance Provider Guidance 2009/10" and "Learner Support Programme Adult Learning Grant Guidance 2009/10". These outline eligibility, administration of funds, and management and audit information.

Records are kept in Learner Services for each individual learner. These records include ALG / EMA agreements, weekly timesheets or attendance printouts from EBS, proof of authorised absences, and reasons for non-payment. Regular audits are conducted to monitor compliance with the funding guidance and College procedures.