



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Student Finance Wales Information Notice:

Education Maintenance Allowance Scheme and Welsh Government Learning Grant (Further Education) Scheme

Academic Year 2023 to 2024

SFWIN 05/2023

(updated September 2023)

This Information Notice provides details of the following income assessed schemes for the 2023 to 2024 academic year:

- Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)
- Welsh Government Learning Grant (Further Education) (WGLG (FE)).

The EMA and WGLG (FE) schemes are currently being drafted for the 2023 to 2024 academic year. Final versions will be available to view later in the year on the [funding and finance for students webpage](#).

Please ensure that this Information Notice is circulated to all staff and colleagues who help to administer the schemes.

Student Finance Wales service launch and how to apply

The Student Finance Wales service for the 2023 to 2024 academic year launched on 17 April 2023.

How to apply: new students

From April 2023

New applicants can collect a paper form from their school or college. Bilingual paper application packs have been sent to schools and colleges who administer the schemes.

Applications can also be downloaded for printing from the [Student Finance Wales website](#).

From June 2023¹

For the first time new applicants will be able to:

¹ Update: Work for the new system is ongoing and we remain committed to establishing an electronic application service in academic year 2023 to 2024. Further updates will be communicated when available. New students can continue to apply as normal via a paper application, either by downloading an [EMA](#) or [WGLG \(FE\)](#) paper application form or by completing a paper application which can be obtained from their school or college.

- electronically submit their EMA or WGLG (FE) application
- upload their supporting evidence via the Student Finance Wales website.

The electronic application submission service will be bilingual and is expected to launch in June 2023. We will provide further updates soon.

How to apply: returning students

For returning students they are not required to submit a paper or electronic application. Their signed EMA or WGLG (FE) Agreement acts as their application to reapply for support for a further year. Student Finance Wales will write to returning students during Spring to let them know the next steps to follow for academic year 2023 to 2024.

Students must tell Student Finance Wales if their circumstances have changed since their initial application.

For information and advice contact the Student Finance Wales bilingual customer service on 0300 200 4050.

Education maintenance allowance (EMA) rate

On 17 April 2023 the Minister for Education and Welsh Language confirmed that EMA had increased to the new rate of £40 per week.

2022 to 2023

Eligible new and continuing students will receive the new rate of £40 per week from 17 April 2023. This is subject to meeting all criteria including attendance.

2023 to 2024

The new EMA rate will be paid to eligible new and continuing students from the start of the new academic year.

The Welsh Government will be commissioning an independent review of EMA. This is expected to commence during the 2023 to 2024 academic year. Information about the review will be made available later in the year.

There are no changes to the qualifying EMA and WGLG (FE) income thresholds. WGLG (FE) grants will also be maintained at current levels in 2023 to 2024.

EMA and WGLG (FE) schemes: eligible events

For 2023 to 2024 the EMA and WGLG (FE) schemes will provide provision if a specific event occurs after the first day of the first academic year of the course. This ensures consistent criteria for maintenance support arrangements between FE and HE.

Students (new and continuing) on a course on or after 1 September 2023, could become eligible for support if any of the following events apply²:

- the student's course becomes a designated course (for WGLG (FE)) or an eligible education course (for EMA)
- the student or the student's spouse, civil partner or parent is recognised as a refugee,
- the student or the student's spouse, civil partner or parent becomes a person granted stateless leave
- the student or the student's spouse, civil partner or parent becomes a person with a qualifying form of leave to enter or remain. (For example a person with discretionary leave, leave to remain on the grounds of family life, leave to remain on the grounds of private life or leave on the grounds of Article 8 of the ECHR)
- the student or the student's spouse, civil partner or parent becomes a person granted humanitarian protection status
- the student or the student's parent becomes a person with section 67 leave to remain
- the student or the student's parent becomes a person granted leave to remain as a protected partner (i.e. leave to remain as either a victim of domestic violence or abuse, or as a bereaved partner)
- the student becomes a person with Calais Leave
- the student becomes the family member of a person who was a UK national on the first day of the first academic year of the course

² Update. The events criteria now include provisions for certain migrant/frontier workers, employed or self-employed persons.

- the student acquires the right of permanent residency – please note, this will also include where the student acquired settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme
- the student becomes a person who satisfies being a migrant/frontier worker, employed person, self-employed person.
- the student becomes a child of a Swiss National.
- the student becomes eligible under one of the Afghan Schemes
- the student becomes a protected Ukrainian National

Student Finance Wales will only be able to determine eligibility and entitlement once they have received a fully completed application form with appropriate supporting evidence.

Funding calculation following an event:

EMA

EMA payments will continue to be administered as per current processes.

Students will receive the £40 weekly allowance for the remaining weeks that they are in attendance for the academic year. This is subject to when their application is received, and the event occurred.

WGLG (FE)³

Entitlement will be calculated, as follows:

$$E/AA \times WGLG (FE) = RE$$

E= the number of remaining days on the student's course from the date of the event to the last day of the student's course year (inclusive)

AA= the number of days of the student's course year from the first day of the course year to last day of the course year (inclusive)

WGLG (FE) = is the full grant entitlement based on a full academic year

³ Update: The WGLG (FE) calculation formula for events will now use the student's course start and end date and not the academic year start and end date. This provides a fairer calculation for eligible students satisfying an event.

RE= the recalculated grant entitlement for the remaining days of the course year from the date of the event

Example:

A student starts a full-time further education course in academic year 2023 to 2024. Their course starts on 1 September 2023. On that date, the student is not eligible for WGLG (FE) support as they did not meet one or more of the eligible student categories.

On 11 March 2024 the student is granted leave by the Home Office. This is an eligible event. The student applies for WGLG (FE) and their application is received within nine months of their course start date. The student's application is approved, and they become eligible for support from 11 March 2024 (date of the event).

Based on the student's household income, they would be entitled to the maximum rate of the full-time grant £1,500. This will be prorated from 11 March 2024 until 31 July 2024 (the last day of the course year).

The calculation in the table above is used to determine the student's pro-rated entitlement for the remaining days of the academic year:

$136 \text{ days (E)} / 228 \text{ days (AA)} \times \text{£}1,500 \text{ grant entitlement (WGLG (FE))} = \text{£}894.74 \text{ (RE)}$

The student's pro-rated WGLG (FE) entitlement for the remaining days of the course year is £894.74, to be paid as follows:

Term 2: £447.37;

Term 3: £447.37.

Application deadlines in relation to an event:

Application deadlines for new and continuing students applying under the event provisions are set out in the [Annex](#).

Late applications or signed agreements

Student Finance Wales will consider if discretion can be applied on a case-by-case basis.

Covid-19 arrangements: attendance, backdated EMA payments and signing learning agreements

The following measures will now become standard features of the schemes:

- the application extension period (13 weeks from 8 weeks) to qualify for backdated EMA payments
- the electronic signing of EMA and WGLG (FE) agreements

We expect learning centres to update and maintain their own guidance and policies.

We also expect that learning centres now consider discretionary arrangements for attendance purposes as standard. For example:

- reasons related to an illness
- self-isolation
- campus closures

These should be included in their decision-making process when:

- submitting their students' attendance confirmations to SFW
- operating and maintaining their own absence and attendance policies

Enquiries

If you have queries about applications, how to apply, payments or any other aspect of the service, please [contact Student Finance Wales directly](#).

If you have any queries about this Information Notice, please contact the Higher Education Division, Welsh Government: - studentfinancedivision@gov.wales.

A copy of this Information Notice can also be downloaded in Welsh or English from the [funding and finance for students webpage](#).

Large print, Braille and alternate language versions of this document are available on request.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English

Annex

Event provisions – application deadlines

EMA	
New students	<p>The applicant will receive the allowance from the date of the event if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the event takes place within the first 13 weeks of the applicant's course start date in the academic year and• their EMA application is received by Student Finance Wales within the first 13 weeks <p>The applicant will receive the allowance from the date the application was received if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the event takes place within the first 13 weeks of the applicant's course start date in the academic year and• their application is received after the 13 week period <p>The applicant will receive the allowance from the date the application is received if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the event takes place after the 13 week period <p>Payments will only commence following confirmation of their signed EMA Agreement.</p>
Continuing students	<p>For purposes of an event a continuing student is different to a person treated as a returning student. A continuing student would be a person who is not already approved for EMA and is in the second or subsequent year of their course/studies.</p> <p>The application deadlines for a continuing student are the same as per a new student above.</p>
Returning students	<p>Event provisions do not apply to returning students as they will already be approved for the allowance.</p>

WGLG (FE)**New students**

The applicant will receive a pro-rated WGLG (FE) grant from the date of the event. This is subject to that event occurring in the same academic year of study. An application must have been received within nine months of the student's course start date in the academic year.

Payments will only commence following confirmation of the student's signed WGLG (FE) Agreement.

Continuing students

For the purposes of an event a continuing student is different to a person treated as a returning student. A continuing student would be a person who is not already approved for WGLG (FE) and is in the second or subsequent year of their course/studies.

The application deadlines for continuing students are the same as per a new student above.

Returning students

Event provisions do not apply to returning students as they will already be approved for the grant.