



To:

Further and Higher Education Institutions in Wales
Registered EMA/WGLG (FE) learning centres
The Student Loans Company
UCAS
NUS Wales
Children's Commissioner for Wales

24 July 2019

Dear Colleague

**EDUCATION MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE (EMA) AND WELSH GOVERNMENT
LEARNING GRANT (FURTHER EDUCATION) (WGLG (FE)) SCHEMES FOR
ACADEMIC YEAR 2019/20.**

This Information Notice provides details of the EMA and WGLG (FE) schemes for AY 2019/20. Please ensure that the SFWIN is circulated to all staff and colleagues who administer the schemes.

ENQUIRIES

If you have any queries about EMA and/or WGLG (FE) or this Information Notice, please contact the Higher Education Division, Welsh Government - email studentfinancedivision@gov.wales. We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

Large print, Braille and alternate language versions of this document are available on request. A copy of this Information Notice can be downloaded in Welsh or English.



Student Finance Wales Information Notice (SFWIN 05/2019)

1. EMA and WGLG (FE) schemes 2019/20

The awards and income thresholds for the means-tested EMA and WGLG (FE) schemes have been maintained at AY 2018/19 levels.

Application forms and guidance notes for AY 2019/20 are available to download via the SFW website. Application packs have also been distributed to those schools and colleges who administer the schemes. The Student Finance Wales (SFW) bilingual customer service can be contacted on 0300 200 4050. Further information is also available on the SFW website: www.studentfinancewales.co.uk/fe.

2. New category of limited leave to enter or remain – Section 67

A new residency category has been included in the EMA and WGLG (FE) Wales schemes from AY 2019/20, so that individuals granted leave to remain under Section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 will be able to apply for the support.

In June 2018, the Home Office introduced a new category of limited leave to enter or remain – Section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 leave ('Section 67 leave') – for those unaccompanied children who have transferred to the UK who do not qualify for leave under the current Immigration Rules as refugees or other protection-based leave. This is the so-called 'Dubs amendment', designed to assist unaccompanied children ('Dubs children'). Individuals who qualify for Section 67 leave will have the right to study, work, access public funds (claim benefits and housing support) and healthcare, and apply for indefinite leave to remain after five years. Section 67 leave is described in the Immigration Rules (rules 352ZG – 352ZS).

To be eligible for transfer to the UK, Dubs children must have been present in Europe before 18 January 2018 and it must be determined, following individual assessment, that it would be in the child's best interests to come to the UK, rather than remain in their current host country, be transferred to another member state, or to be reunited with family outside Europe.

Dependent children of Dubs children will be granted leave to enter or remain for the same duration as their parent provided that certain requirements are met. A child means an individual who is under 18 years of age and for whom the person has parental responsibility.

For the purposes of this eligibility category, a dependent child means a child who is under 18 years of age and for whom the person with Section 67 leave has parental responsibility.

In addition to having Section 67 leave, the person must be:

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- ordinarily resident in Wales on the first day of the first academic year of the course; and
- lawfully ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands at all times since being granted leave to remain under Section 67.

It is expected that a similar change for Section 67 will be made to the Financial Contingency Fund (Further Education) Scheme for AY 2019/20. The suite of undergraduate and postgraduate statutory student support regulations for AY 2019/20 have been amended to include the Section 67 category.

The rationale for making the change continues the longstanding policy of treating refugees and others with leave to enter or remain as eligible for student support, enabling students from a variety of backgrounds to attend further education and promote equality of access. The EMA and WGLG (FE) application forms and guidance notes for AY 2019/20 have been updated to reflect this new category.

3. Eligible courses – Independent Living Skills programmes

For the purposes of the EMA and WGLG (FE) schemes, eligible students must be undertaking a further education course up to level 3 (equivalent to A level or NVQ level 3), leading to a qualification issued by a recognised awarding body.

The Welsh Government is currently working with FE institutions and ColegauCymru to develop a revised curriculum for the Independent Living Skills learning area. The revised curriculum is being developed in response to recommendations set out in a recent Estyn Thematic Report and each new programme is designed to provide a practical approach for gaining and consolidating skills, in order to prepare learners for adult life.

Under the new curriculum, ILS learners will follow tailored individual programmes which develop their skills across 4 'pillars' of learning.

- Health and Wellbeing;
- Employability;
- Independent Living; and
- Community Inclusion.

Whilst some ILS learners may undertake qualifications (or units of qualifications), formal qualifications are unlikely to be appropriate for the bulk of ILS learners.

To support this new development change, learners with learning difficulties commencing a programme of learning which is wholly non-accredited and leads to the achievement of a personalised learning programme funded by the Welsh Government under the Preparation for Life and Work programme area, will be eligible to apply for EMA or WGLG (FE) support for AY 2019/20, subject to satisfying all other eligibility criteria.

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There is an expectation that each programme will be underpinned by robust processes for initial assessment, target setting and monitoring achievement against targets. This will ensure that the aims and purpose of awarding EMA and WGLG (FE) support are maintained.

SLC's Learning Centre guidance will shortly be updated to provide information about this change.