
Dear User

EMA Payment Decisions: High Number of 'Not Set' Decisions and changes to the back payment timeout limit for PLA, E2E and FE short course weekly and bonus payments.

Please share the contents of this email with your EMA Co-ordinators and all other staff responsible for administering EMA within your school or college.

'Not Set' Decisions

It has come to our attention that the number of 'Not Set' decisions for EMA payments relating to learning activity in the current term is higher than we would have expected.

We have received feedback from learners about this and would ask that wherever possible a 'Yes' or 'No' decision is made. If it is not possible to make a 'Yes' or 'No' payment decision and a 'Not Set' decision is in place, colleagues are asked to make every effort to confirm the payment decision within four weeks.

It is worth remembering that EMA is an incentive payment and the incentive is lost if payments are delayed; undermining the scheme intent. Delaying payments also increases the risk of learners leaving learning for financial reasons.

The easiest way to identify all 'Not Set' decisions is by using the 'Payment' tab in laps, which will present you with the 'Weekly Payment' screen and allow you to create a list of 'Not Set' decisions by week. As you select each week it will bring back a list of learners who are due payments and enable you to make the decision within that screen.

Back Payment Timeout Limit

Users who are administering payments for learners on PLA, E2E or FE Short course Programme Types should be aware that the timeout limit in laps for back payment of weekly payments and bonuses is eight weeks after a learner's course has ended. In 2008/09, users had 52 weeks in which to make weekly payment decisions and 39 weeks to make bonus decisions. This means that users now have only eight weeks from the course end date to make a "Yes" or "No" decision for each learner's weekly payment and bonus decision. After eight weeks, laps will no longer allow you to enter a decision and you will not be able to pay the learner.

It is therefore very important that prompt weekly payment and bonus decisions are made for all learners. As we have stated above, EMA is an incentive payment and the incentive is lost if payments are delayed. If you have any learners registered on an 2009/10 programme with 'Not Set' decisions, whose course ended more than eight weeks ago and you would like to enter a 'Yes' or 'No' decision, you

should call the Provider Helpline on 0845 600 7979 or email lscenquiries@lsclearnersupport.co.uk for assistance.

Please note that this Back Payment Timeout Limit does not apply to learners enrolled on the FE Academic Year Programme Type or for payments that relate to the 2008/09 year.

We are aware of many specific providers that have made concerted efforts to reduce outstanding Not-Set decisions and would express thanks to them for work they have already been undertaken to address this issue.

If you have any queries at all about the payment process, please consult the [Provider Guidance](#) on the LSC website: <http://ema.lsc.gov.uk/ema-guidance/guidance2009-10/>. If your query cannot be resolved in this way please contact the Provider Helpline on 0845 600 7979.

Kind Regards

Learner Support Service on behalf of the Learning and Skills Council

EMA and ALG guidance notes are available at www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/moneytolearn