Mayor’s Education Award: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is it?
The Mayor’s Education Award is a grant of £400 per academic year, to help students stay in education. It is not a loan and students who receive it will not need to pay it back.

How much do students receive?
Every student who meets the eligibility criteria and application deadline for the Mayor’s Education Award will receive £400 per academic year, paid in two instalments the first payments will be issued between February to March 2015 and the second payments will be issued between April to May 2015

Who can apply?
To apply, students must be all of the following:

- 16 to 19 years old before the start of the academic year in which their course starts and 16 to 21 years old for those with special needs or learning difficulties or disabilities
- living in Tower Hamlets for at least three years at the time of their application (young people who have lived in the borough for less than three years but hold full refugee status are also eligible, as are young people who are looked after by Tower Hamlets Council outside the borough)
- attending a maintained school or college (schools and colleges will be able to verify whether this applies to them) or another learning provider that provides nationally recognised qualifications and is subject to government inspection
- studying for a nationally accredited further education course
- from a family with a household income of less than £20,817 in the 2014/15 tax year (please note that household income includes taxable income, Working Tax Credit and taxable benefits).

Can I apply now?
The first round of applications this year opens on September 15, 2014 and closes on December 15, 2014 or three months after your enrolment date if you enrol later than September 15.

Do I have to be studying for A-levels to be eligible?
Not necessarily. Students taking nationally accredited further education qualifications that are equivalent to A-levels can also apply.

Do students have to study in Tower Hamlets?
No. Students can study in a school, sixth form or college in another borough as long as they have lived in Tower Hamlets for at least three years at the time of their application or are under the care of Tower Hamlets Council. Students who attend private schools and colleges will need to check with their school’s admissions office, to find out if they are participating in the scheme.
How do I apply?
When the scheme re-opens in September 2014, students should download an application form from www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/mea which they will need to complete and return. Every applicant will need to have their form stamped by their school or college as evidence that they are attending lessons and meeting acceptable levels of behaviour. Students who enrolled late this academic year can use this application form, as long as they are applying within three months of their enrolment date.

How long do applications take?
Applications are processed by the Council’s Benefits Team and take up to eight weeks.

Do I have to apply twice to receive both instalments?
Students need to make one application for the Mayor’s Education Award per academic year. As long as students continue to attend school or college, one application will cover both instalments.

Can I receive the Mayor’s Education Award in cash if I don’t have a bank account?
No, the award can only be paid directly into a student’s bank account. Students who don’t currently have a bank account will need to set up their own account in order for the money to be transferred.

Why does the application form ask for information about my family’s income?
The Mayor’s Education Award is designed to help students who would have been eligible for the Education Maintenance Allowance, which was also means-tested. In order to ensure the awards go to the students who need it most, we need to ask for some basic information about your family’s income.

Where is the money coming from to fund the award?
Council reserves are being used to fund the scheme initially while opportunities for support from corporate sponsors are being explored.

Can I appeal if my application is refused?
Yes. Applicants can appeal in writing, to Benefits Team if they are refused an award. Appeals need to be received by the Benefits team within 21 days of the date of the letter refusing support.

Who should I contact for further information?
If you have a query regarding an application submitted during the last round. Please contact the Council’s Benefits Team on 020 7364 5001. For general enquiries, students are encouraged to speak to someone at their school or college, until the next round opens.