

Article - Disabled Students' Allowance and what they are for?

Disabled Students' Allowance and what they are for?

DSAs are aimed at helping disabled people to study on an equal basis with other students. They do not have to be repaid and can cover the costs of specialist equipment, extra travel costs and non-medical helpers.

If your application is successful, these are examples of the kind of support that may be recommended:

- equipment
- non-medical helper
- travel costs you have to pay as extra because of your disability

If you are assessed as requiring a high spec PC and your own isn't capable of running assistive software, you may be recommended one and receive a contribution, but you will be required to pay the first £200.00 to Student Finance England.

The money is not paid directly to you - instead you arrange delivery of any equipment directly with the supplier after you receive your recommendation letter from Student Finance England.

The Disability Advisory Service can also help you organise any non-medical helper support

If you live in England

As a higher education student living in England, you can apply for a [Disabled Students' Allowance](#) (DSA) if you have a disability which includes a long-term health condition, a mental health condition and/or a specific learning difficulty, e.g. dyslexia.

You must meet the [definition of disability](#) under the Equality Act 2010 and provide evidence of your condition.

<http://www.yourdsa.com/> is a useful guide.

<https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas/overview> gives all the governmental guidelines, application forms and relevant information for students who live in **England**.

If you live in other UK regions:

DSA is administered in a very similar way for students from Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales but you should refer to your respective agencies for details and application forms.

- Student Finance Northern Ireland www.studentfinancenir.co.uk 0300 100 0077
- Student Awards Agency for Scotland www.saas.gov.uk 0300 555 0505
- Student Finance Wales www.studentfinancewales.co.uk 0300 200 4050

If you live in the Channel Islands or Isle of Man:

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DSA is administered differently by your local government and your application may be subject to means testing. Please contact your local government's education offices:

- **Guernsey** - 01481 733 000
- **Jersey** - 01534 449 279
- **Isle of Man** - 01624 685 820

Students funded by a research council:

Please contact your Research Council and also liaise with the University Disability Advisory Service.

Students funded through NHS bursaries:

Please contact the NHS www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/students or telephone 0845 358 6655

If you are an international or EU student, please email disability@reading.ac.uk as soon as possible.

Getting proof of your disability, medical condition or specific learning difficulty

To apply for the DSA, you will need to send Student Finance England evidence of your disability along with your application form.

If you have mobility impairment, sensory impairment or a medical condition you will need to provide medical proof of this - for example, a letter from an appropriate medical professional such as your GP.

The letter needs to state the following:

- your diagnosis
- that it is long-term, i.e. has lasted/will last longer than 12 months
- the ways in which the disability/condition has a significant impact on your normal day to day living.

If you are unsure about whether the medical evidence you have is suitable or would like help in getting medical evidence, please contact the Disability Advisory Service, disability@reading.ac.uk, 0118 378 6602/8921

For all disabilities including mental health conditions, this form can be filled in and signed by your GP/other mental health professional you have consulted:

http://media.slc.co.uk/sfe/nysf/sfe_dsa_disability_evidence_form.pdf

If you have a specific learning difficulty (SpLD) such as dyslexia, you must provide evidence in the form of a diagnostic assessment report from a psychologist or suitably qualified

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specialist teacher. This report must have been produced after your 16th birthday to fulfil DSA eligibility requirements.

You will have to pay for any tests to establish your eligibility for Disabled Students' Allowances. If you need a test but cannot afford to pay for it, you may be able to get financial help through your university or college's Access to Learning Fund.

Please contact the Disability Advisory Service for further guidance.

How do I apply?

You will need to complete the DSA application form, available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas/how-to-claim>

If you are applying for other student finance (loan, maintenance grant etc.), fill in the **DSA slim form**.

If you are an undergraduate or postgraduate student not applying for student finance, fill in the **DSA long form**.

Please contact the Disability Advisory Service so that we can fill in Section 5.

Send your application as early as possible, ahead of starting your course so that support can be put in place ready for when you start.

The Disability Advisory Service can help you with the application form, provide guidance as to whether applying for DSA is appropriate for you and can liaise with Student Finance England to keep track of your application.