

Dear Student,

If you are entitled to Disabled students' allowance (DSA), and have ticked that you are happy for your information to be passed onto your University, we will receive a copy of your eligibility letter (called a DSA2). A copy of this is also sent to you directly by DSA.

We know that this is a lot of information, but please take the time to carefully read each of the sections outlined in your DSA letter and action accordingly.

Each section covers the type of support you may have been awarded which could be:

- Specialist equipment allowance.
- Non-medical helper allowance.
- General allowance.
- Travel allowance.

This support is external to the University, and as such the University do not get involved in setting up your DSA support. Your support or equipment will not be set up or sent to you automatically, it is your responsibility to contact the suppliers in your letter asap, to make sure your support or equipment is in place.

**Note:** there may be a different supplier for each stage, for example a supplier to deliver the equipment, and another supplier to help train you to use software. You will need to contact each supplier separately and arrange a time for delivery or training.

### Understanding your DSA letter:

#### Specialist Equipment Allowance:

Item	Supplier	Contact Details	Quote Number	Amount you'll pay the supplier	Amount we'll pay the supplier

If you have been awarded Specialist Equipment Allowance, you will need to contact the supplier(s) listed, and arrange: delivery, set up, and familiarisation with your equipment.

You will need the quote number and/or your Customer Reference Number which can be found on the top right of your DSA letter.

**Note:** If you have been recommended a laptop in your Specialist Equipment Allowance, you will have to make a £200 contribution towards the cost. However, if your household income is below a certain threshold you may be able to have the

£200 reimbursed by the University. Please contact the Student Financial Support team or the Disability Advisory Service to find out whether you are eligible for this. You will need to make sure you keep the receipt of your purchase and email it to [disability@reading.ac.uk](mailto:disability@reading.ac.uk) for reimbursement.

### Non-Medical Helper's Allowance

Item	Supplier	Contact Details	Duration	Amount we'll pay the supplier
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If you have been awarded Non-medical Helper's Allowance, you will again need to contact the supplier(s) to set up support. Your DSA letter will describe the type of support you are entitled to under 'Item' and the hours of the support under 'duration'. You need to contact the supplier listed in your letter to arrange support. For example, If you have been allocated funding for a specialist mentor, you will need to email them directly to set up your support sessions, which can often be online, but may also be on campus.

### General Allowance

**The following is paid from your General Allowance but we'll pay the supplier directly**

Item	Supplier	Amount we pay to the supplier
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If you have been awarded General Support, the DSA letter will tell you the item details you've been awarded and the amount available for those. Students pay for the items listed and claim the money back from Student Finance. For example, if you have been awarded help with the cost of Ink and Paper / Photocopying and Printing Costs, you will need to make sure you keep the receipts of your purchases and submit your claim to Student Finance directly. Instructions on reimbursement are provided within the section of General Allowance.

**Important:** You will need to keep the receipts and follow the instructions on the DSA letter for claiming the amount spent. We recommend you log these in one spreadsheet, and save photographs of your receipts into one folder.

### Travel Allowance

Travel agreed between	Journeys per year	Taxi Cost	Public Transport Cost – amount you need to pay	Amount we'll pay you
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If you have been awarded help with the cost of travel. Taxis - you will need to contact a licensed taxi provider to arrange the journeys. Other forms of travel – you will need to keep receipts. All instructions are enclosed in the email sent to you by DSA.

**Important:** Some suppliers will claim back costs directly, whilst others you may need to pay them and claim the money back. In this case you will need to keep the receipts and follow the instructions on the DSA letter for claiming the amount spent. We recommend you log these in one spreadsheet, and save photographs of your receipts into one folder.

### **Other ways to understand your DSA and money matters:**

Please visit the [funding support pages](#) of our website for further information, including an **explanatory video** as to how to [understand your DSA letter](#), and arrange support with the supplier(s).

Remember that our [financial support teams](#) are here to help you, should you be finding you are struggling financially.

Please also find information and guidance to students on our [focus on cost of living](#) webpage.

The [digital Support fund](#) introduced during Covid continues and is specifically for students who many struggle to fund essential IT costs of university.

The [Student Financial Support Team](#) are available to guide and support students with all money matters, by phone, email or in-person.

[Blackbullion](#) offers courses and advice on how students can manage their money when at University.

### **RSU Advice**

RSU [Advice Centre](#) is open 10am-4pm and runs a daily drop-in

Email [advice@rusu.co.uk](mailto:advice@rusu.co.uk)

If you have any further queries related to your disability or your DSA, please don't hesitate to contact us.

### **Other frequently asked questions:**

**What is the difference between DSA and DAS?**

- **DSA** or Disabled Student Allowance is Government funding, on top of Student Finance, to help with costs towards equipment or support needs that students may have as a disabled student. To get DSA you must be a 'home' student and meet the eligibility criteria. DSA is external to the University, we are not involved in this at all, but we can help you with your application.
- **DAS** stands for Disability Advisory Service. We are the University team who students need to speak to, to discuss the impact of your disability on your studies, so we can make recommendations to your school of any reasonable adjustments required to your learning or exams (these won't be automatic just because you ticked you have a disability on your UCAS form, and whilst we do our best, not all adjustments are possible – speak to an Adviser to check).

### **There are lots of different Tutors and Mentors, what are the differences?**

- [Academic Tutors](#) - All undergraduate and postgraduate taught students are allocated an Academic Tutor – this is a member of academic staff in the School or Department who acts as a key point of contact throughout the student's degree. (University provided).
- Social or Academic Mentors are 'other students', who are employed to spend a few hours a week providing support to targeted students. (University provided through DAS, only for students who are eligible – we will tell you if you are eligible).
- SpLD Tutor - a specialist Tutor (external to the University), who provides one-to-one tutor support. (DSA provided).
- Specialist Mentor - a specialist Mentor (external to the University), who provides one-to-one mentoring support. (DSA provided).