

This fact sheet explains the extra help available to you if you have a disability, mental-health condition or specific learning difficulty like dyslexia or dyspraxia. You can also read '**Bridging the gap: A guide to the Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) in higher education**' which you can download from our website www.direct.gov.uk/sfforms2012 or order by calling on **0845 300 5090**.

What is it for?

DSAs are available if you have a disability, mental-health condition or specific learning difficulty. They can help pay for the extra costs you may have while studying your course which are a direct result of your disability, mental-health condition or specific learning difficulty.

How much can I get?

How much you can get does not depend on your income, or that of your family, but it does depend on a needs assessment. Your needs assessment will be carried out at an independent assessment centre, or at a centre within your university or college by a person with specialist knowledge, who will work out what kind of help or support you'll need to make sure you get the best out of your time at university or college. **Please note you should only book a needs assessment when we tell you to.**

The table below shows the help available and the maximum amounts for 2012/13.

Allowance	What is it for?	What can I get?	Do I have to pay it
Specialist equipment allowance	Helps buy any equipment you might need. You can also use it to pay for repairs, technical support, insurance or extended warranty costs arising from owning the equipment.	Up to £5,161 for the whole course .	No, unless you leave your course early.
Non-medical helper's allowance	Helps pay for any support workers you might need such as note takers or readers.	Up to £20,520 a year if you are a full-time student. If you are studying part-time you can get up to £15,390 per year.	No, unless you leave your course early.

General allowance	Helps pay for other disability related spending such as print cartridges.	Up to £1,724 a year if you are a full-time student. If you are studying part-time you up to a maximum of £1,293 a year depending on how intensive your course is.	No, unless you leave your course early
Travel allowance	Helps with any extra travel costs you may have to pay to attend your university or college because of your disability.	Full-time and part-time students can get reasonable spending on extra travel costs you may have to pay to attend your university or college course because of your disability.	No, unless you leave your course early

How do I apply for DSAs?

Step 1

Go to www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance **NOW** and apply for student finance.

Click on the option to apply for Disabled Students' Allowances on your main application. This will automatically trigger a shortened version of the DSA application form (DSASL) to be sent out to you to fill in and return to us. You can also download this form from www.direct.gov.uk/sfforms2012. Fill this in and return it to Student Finance England.

If you are only applying for DSAs and no other form of student finance, simply download the full DSA application form (DSA1F) from www.direct.gov.uk/sfforms2012. Fill this in and return it to us.

Step 2

Receive your eligibility notification. If you're eligible for DSAs we will write and tell you to arrange a needs assessment to find out exactly what equipment and support you need.

Step 3

Book your needs assessment. You should book your assessment as soon as you receive notification of your eligibility. To find your nearest approved needs assessment centre go to the website at www.dsa-qag.org.uk

Top tips



Remember: if you are applying for DSAs only (and no other student finance), you will have to complete a new application form for each year of your course.

Step 4

Receive your entitlement notification. Once we receive the results of your needs assessment, we will write and let you know if DSAs can pay for any specialist equipment and other support that has been recommended in your needs assessment. We will also give you instructions for ordering equipment or arranging other support.

Step 5

Order your equipment and arrange your other support.

Step 6

Start your course.

Open University students

You should apply directly to the Open University's Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA) office. If you have told the Open University (OU) that you have a disability, mental-health condition or a specific learning difficulty, the OU's DSA Office will automatically send you all the information you need to apply. You will need to send your completed form and any relevant documents, back to the Open University's DSA Office. Or you can apply online at www.open.ac.uk/financialsupport/apply.

NHS or research council funding

If you're receiving funding from the NHS or a research council see www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/Students.aspx.

NHS Secondrees

You are not normally eligible for bursaries or DSAs from the NHS. However, you can receive DSAs from us if you meet the eligibility conditions.

Benefits

Most full-time students cannot get income related benefits such as Income-based Employment and Support Allowance or Housing Benefit. However, certain groups including some disabled students may be able to get income-related benefits while they are studying.

Jobcentre Plus and your local authority's Housing Benefit section will take account of most of any Maintenance Loan (and some student grants). However, DSAs will not be taken into account.

There is a free and confidential Benefit Enquiry Line for people with disabilities and their carers. The number is **0800 882 200** (textphone: 0800 243 355).

Skill at Disability Alliance

The Skill Disabled Students Helpline can give you advice on benefits and DSAs. The opening hours are:

Tuesdays 11:30am-1:30pm

Thursdays 1:30pm-3:30pm

Tel: **0800 328 5050**

Email: **skilldisabledstudents@disabilityalliance.org**

Further information

You can get more information from **www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance** or by calling **0845 300 5090** (textphone: **0845 604 4434**) between 8am and 8pm Monday to Friday, and between 9am and 5:30pm on Saturdays and Sundays.