DSA ONLINE GUIDE TO PRIVATE BETA

SESSION 2024-2025

DSA Online application service - Private beta

Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) is a non-income-assessed allowance to support students with a disability or impairment. The fund covers additional costs or expenses arising from their additional needs while studying.

This guide will provide information on:

- DSA Online
- what is private beta?
- DSA private beta first release
- DSA private beta functionality in development
- helping us to improve the service
- dedicated support

DSA Online

SAAS is transforming how students apply for DSA. We have invited a small number of higher education institutions (HEIs) to help us shape the future of the new online application service.

The new digital advisor-led application service will be as inclusive as possible, prioritising students' needs and asking for information rather than documents.

The new service will also inform the Learning Support Team every step, from DSA application processing times to informing them of the award decision and viewing the award notice online. Disability Advisors can support students with full knowledge of the funding they are due to receive.

What is private beta?

The DSA project team within SAAS has identified and built on the needs of the student and the Learning Support team, carrying out extensive user research and developing the service.

A first version of the service has been launched for a select number of users to be tested, first as a private beta and then as a public beta alongside the current service.

During private beta, we will accept and process online applications for students who:

- are eligible to receive DSA
- are studying full-time
- are applying for DSA for the first time
- have a SAAS Account
- have SAAS main funding in place
- are studying at a HEI that has agreed to take part in private beta

The private beta phase will help us understand how users interact with the new service, allowing us to iterate and improve the service based on user feedback.

As we develop the service in the future, we plan to roll out the service across more HEIs and further student user groups.

DSA private beta first release

The functionality of the service is constantly being developed. For the first release in September 2024, the following features will be available to Disability Advisors and students:

A Disability Advisor or user with relevant permissions can:

- get dedicated help with the new DSA online service
- create a secure DSA Account
- find a student
- complete disabilities
- complete consumable items allowance
- complete equipment, software and accessories allowance
- complete travel expenses
- complete needs assessment fee
- accept declaration
- sign in to view the application processing status
- sign in to view a student's DSA history
- receive a notification with an award decision

A student with a pending application submitted by their advisor can:

- view their application from their SAAS Account Dashboard
- check their details on the application are correct
- review the disability and allowances information
- accept declaration
- submit the application for processing
- choose bank account details for DSA payments
- receive a notification with an award decision
- receive an email with the award notice

DSA private beta functionality in development

During the private beta process, further updates to the service will be built and released.

These include:

- document upload functionality to allow advisors to upload a quote for consumable items and equipment, software and accessories, reducing data input time

- student sign in to the SAAS Account to view the award notice online
- Disability Advisor sign in to DSA Account to the award notice online
- ensure year 1 DSA students can continue to use the service in year 2 and beyond
- withdraw an application pre or post-submission
- improve the process for setting up advisors with DSA online accounts
- update roles and permissions

Helping us to improve the service

Your feedback on the service within the private beta is vital.

When using the service, use the link at the top of the page to provide regular feedback on your experience and suggest features that would help improve the online application.

We will also invite you to take part in focus groups to help us develop the service to meet our users' needs.

Dedicated support

One of the benefits of taking part in private beta is dedicated support, separate from the SAAS general contact centre.

The DSA Support team will be on hand to help you manage your account, use the online service, troubleshoot and next steps.

Within the service, you will see a link for help, but you can also use the following contact details:

Contact details

DSA Advisor Line: 0131 287 0952
Email: saas_dsaonline_enquiries@gov.scot