Welcome to Funding Support for Disabled Students at Higher Education

Please mute your microphone
The session will begin in a few minutes
It will be recorded – by remaining in the meeting you are giving consent for that. The recording will only be available via the HeppFest website.
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Exploring the DSA
(Disabled Students’ Allowance)

As a crucial source of support for many disabled students in Higher Education
What is it?

• An academic budget, issued by the UK Government to cover a Disabled Student’s individual support costs in University/ Higher Education;
• Set up in 1991;
• Delivered by UK student finance bodies – SFE, SFW, SFNI, SAAS
• It does not come as money – but as a mix of technical/ practical support;
• It is not means tested;
• It is not a benefit- it will not compromise any family benefits;
• It is not a loan – what you get is yours to keep!
Who can apply?

• Any student/applicant who has a diagnosis of something that will interfere with how they study
• Full time or part time (covering at least 25% of a full time equivalent course)
• Only for HE level 4 and upwards courses (not access course)
• Any student who would be entitled to a govt student loan
What evidence is needed?

• SFE and other funding bodies insist on evidence from your GP/NHS specialist or psychologist - (they have a form for the surgery/consultant to complete);
• They look for a clear diagnosis including how it affects you (lack of concentration/fatigue/variable mood);
• Hidden/unseen diagnoses are included (mental health issues);
• EHCP/SEN report is acceptable only for Asperger's/ASD;
• Dyslexia must be evidenced through a full diagnostic report by an accredited educational psychologist at secondary or college age.
What can your DSA provide you with?

- Equipment: Assistive technology or software which would address a disability related need (i.e., not course related)
- Ergonomic workstation – chair, footrest, and keyboard
- One-to-one study skill coaching / mentor support / BSL support
- Reimbursement of any disability related costs eg coloured overlays / extra copying
- Cost of regular / emergency taxi to attend.
Who decides what you will get?

• You will receive an appointment at an Assessment Centre to discuss your disability related needs;
• Equipment and technology will be demonstrated to you;
• You will collaborate with the assessor to work out what would best fit the way you work and the course you are enrolling on;
• A full report will be drawn up and sent to SFE for approval.
When should you apply?

• You can apply at any time from application and even during the course
• If you switch to another University – your budget goes with you and can be added to, to match the new period of study;
• Processes can be slow – allow 2 months at least!
• New forms for September will come out end of Feb / March;
• First – collect your disability related evidence and work with your University / HE Disability Team.
Justine Cooper
Wellbeing Inclusive Support Coordinator
Sheffield Hallam University
E: disability-support@shu.ac.uk
Applying for DSA (Disabled Students Allowance)
What does it look like on Student Finance England account page?
DISABLED STUDENTS ALLOWANCES

NEW ONLINE APPLICATIONS
Do you have any of the following?

- Physical disability (For example you have a physical impairment or mobility issue, such as difficulty using your arms or using a wheelchair or crutches)
- Blind / Partial Sight (For example you are blind or have a serious visual impairment uncorrected by glasses)
- Deaf / Partial Hearing (For example you are deaf or have a serious hearing impairment)
- Long term health condition (For example you have a long standing illness or health condition such as cancer, HIV, chronic heart disease, or epilepsy)
- Mental health condition (For example you have a mental health condition, such as depression, schizophrenia or anxiety disorder)
- Specific learning difficulty (For example you have a specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, dyspraxia or AD(H)D)
- Autistic spectrum disorder (For example you have a social/communication impairment such as Asperger’s syndrome/other autistic spectrum disorder)
- Other

If you do, you might be able to get Disabled Students’ Allowances (DSAs) to help support you while you study – these don’t have to be paid back.

To get DSAs, you must meet the definition of a disability under the Equality Act 2010.

- Yes
- No

Continue
You might be able to get Disabled Students’ Allowances

What you can get

DSAs can help with the costs of:

- having a person to give you additional support while you’re studying
- specialist equipment
- travel, for example if you can’t use public transport because of your disability
- other study-related costs you have as a direct result of your disability

Computer equipment

DSAs may be able to pay for assistive software to help you while you study, for example a screen reader. If you don’t have a computer, or the one you have can’t run the software recommended for you, DSAs may help towards the costs of a new one. If you’re applying for DSAs for the first time you’ll have to pay £200 towards the costs of this new computer.

Repayment

DSAs don’t have to be paid back.

Do you want to apply for Disabled Students' Allowances?

- Yes, I want to apply for Disabled Students’ Allowances
  - You’ll be able to apply for this once you’ve submitted your application for student finance.

- No, I don’t want to apply for Disabled Students’ Allowances
DISABLED STUDENTS’ ALLOWANCES
ONLINE APPLICATION – MY ACCOUNT

Laura's account

Customer Reference Number: 7449427416

EU nationals: Currently, new students in 2016 must prove they have been living in the UK for three years before their course start date in order to get living cost support from Student Finance England.

1. 2017/2018 Full time MATHEMATICS AND PHILOSOPHY (INT)

Your to-do list

1. Give us your valid UK passport details
   - So we can check your identity, you need to give us your valid UK passport details.
   - Enter passport details
   - Can't provide your passport details?

2. Disabled Students' Allowances
   - You have indicated that you want to apply for Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs).
   - Start your application
   - Tell me more about the DSAs application process
DISABLED STUDENTS’ ALLOWANCES
ONLINE APPLICATION – WHAT TYPE OF DISABILITY

What type of disability do you have?

To get DSA you must meet the definition of a disability under the Equality Act 2010.

What is the Equality Act?
The Equality Act 2010 has made it illegal for universities and colleges to discriminate against disabled students by treating them less favourably in admissions policies or the services they provide. Under the Act, universities and colleges must make reasonable adjustments so that students with disabilities are not at a substantial disadvantage compared to students who are not disabled.

This means you can tell your university or college about your disability, long term health condition, mental health condition or specific learning difficulty in confidence to make sure you receive the support you need.

The Act applies to you if you have a physical, sensory or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities, including education.

You’ll be asked to send evidence of each disability you have. We’ll give you more information about what you need to send once you have submitted your application.
DISABLED STUDENTS’ ALLOWANCES

ONLINE APPLICATION – WHAT TYPE OF DISABILITY

Select all that apply

- Physical disability
  For example you have a physical impairment or mobility issue, such as difficulty using your arms or using a wheelchair or crutches

- Blind / Partial Sight
  For example you are blind or have a serious visual impairment uncorrected by glasses

- Deaf / Partial Hearing
  For example you are deaf or have a serious hearing impairment

- Long term health condition
  For example you have a long standing illness or health condition such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease, or epilepsy

- Mental health condition
  For example you have a mental health condition, such as depression, schizophrenia or anxiety disorder

- Specific learning difficulty
  For example you have a specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, dyspraxia or ADHD

- Autistic spectrum disorder
  For example you have a social/communication impairment such as Asperger’s syndrome/other autistic spectrum disorder

- Other

Continue
DISABLED STUDENTS’ ALLOWANCES
ONLINE APPLICATION – CONSENT TO SHARE

Consent to share

If you allow us to share information about your application for DSAs, both Student Finance England and your university or college can work together to make sure you get the support you need.

Do I have to share my information?

You don’t have to tell your university or college about your disability or give us permission to share information about your application for DSAs. However, this may mean they can’t make reasonable adjustments to support you and it may delay the support you need.

What is a Needs Assessor?

A Needs Assessor is a person who is trained to make recommendations about the additional support you need to fully participate on your course. They’ll write a Needs Assessment to tell us about the support or equipment they recommend. Sharing information with them means we can discuss requests for support made in your Needs Assessment.

I agree  I don’t agree

My DSAs suppliers and Student Finance England may exchange information about my application for DSAs.

The disability service at my university or college and Student Finance England may exchange information about my application for DSAs.

I agree  I don’t agree

Your application will still be processed if you don’t agree to share information. However, it may take longer for your support to be arranged and you’ll have to coordinate with the disability service yourself.
Finally, do you want to tell us more about how your disability affects you while you're studying?

You can tell us anything about your disability and how it affects you that hasn’t been covered in the application. This is optional and it won’t affect the outcome of your application if you don’t give us any additional information.

Yes  No

Tell us more about how your disability affects you while you’re studying

This is optional and it won’t affect the outcome of your application if you don’t give us any additional information.

Test text

Continue
2. Disabled Students’ Allowances

You need to send us evidence of your disability.

For each specific learning difficulty you have, send us: A diagnostic report, written in accordance with the 2005 Specific Learning Difficulty Working Group Guidelines, from either a registered psychologist or a suitably qualified specialist teacher who holds a Specific Learning Difficulty Assessment Practicing Certificate.

You can email your evidence to dsa_medical_evidence@ssl.co.uk, or you can send a photocopy of it to the address below. Please include your name and customer reference number or date of birth so that we know who it’s from, and only send your medical evidence once unless we contact you to request further copies.

If you’ve already sent us evidence of your disability you don’t need to send it again. We’ll contact you by post once we’ve processed your evidence.

Tell me more about the DSAs application process
What happens next?

Once you have applied and sent in your suitable disability evidence you will receive a letter informing you that you are eligible for a Study Needs Assessment.
Study Needs Assessment

• Book your Study Needs Assessment
  https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-assessment-centre

• What happens at a Study Needs Assessment?
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S-iYQbkRli8
Final Steps

After the assessment you will receive a letter that tells you what you are entitled to and how to access the equipment and support.
Is DSA the only support that I need to apply for at university?

Not quite ...
Some of the support is discussed with and put in place by the university

• University support is agreed though discussion between the student and their university disability adviser

• There might be some variations in the type of support available across different HE providers so speak to the Disability Service to ensure that your support needs can be met
Types of university support

• Refer students for diagnostic assessments e.g. SpLD, ASC - some universities full or part fund these (or don’t)
• Exam support (e.g. extra time, use of PC, rest periods, individual accommodation, exam papers in alternative formats - braille or large print)
• Learning Support Plans e.g. request teaching materials are available to students prior to teaching sessions, prioritised reading lists, don’t draw attention to student leaving early/arriving late to the teaching session, group work and presentation support
• Many universities record lectures and make the recordings available online
Types of university support (cont)

- Workload management e.g. interim study skills support, mentor support, computing equipment/software might be available before your DSA is approved.

- Not all the Support Worker support that as student might need is funded through DSA e.g. note takers. Orientation support, Library Support Assistant, Exam Support Workers (reader, scribe).

- Access to the teaching environment (disabled parking permits, library assistants, timetable adjustments).
So, as well as applying for DSA, contact the disability service at your university to set up support.
Disability Champion
Rajpal
Disabled Students’ Allowance

Rajpal
The support I received through DSA

- Equipment/ Specialist support, for example:
  - Printer
  - Funding for ink and paper costs
  - 1:1 mentoring sessions

- I needed this support due to my disability.

- Support to assist me with my studies at university.
My experience of the DSA process

- The whole DSA process ran smoothly for me because there was organisation.

- The DSA process was good because there was help on the DSA webpages which I found useful for information and reassuring.

- I also considered how long the DSA process would take.

- For me, the support I needed was put in place fairly quickly.
Did you find the assessment of study need appointment useful?

- I attended an appointment also known as a ‘needs’ assessment.

- This appointment was to talk about what support I would require at university due to my disability.

- For me, this was useful because:
  - the needs assessor was understanding
  - they considered my needs
  - they put into place my support at university.
Was the initial admin that you had to do as part of your DSA application worth it in the end?

- The paperwork involved was worth it in the end because I received thorough support with my studies.

- The time taken to complete my DSA application was worth it in the end because I also felt less worried about going to university with a disability.

- Thus, I felt comforted because there was support in place for when I arrive at university.
Summary of DSA

- This process is both helpful and useful because the needs assessors consider your needs.

- They understand what support you need in place for university.

- The assessment is a discussion which involves:
  - talking about your disability.
  - the difficulties experienced,
  - And whichever support that would be useful and helpful to assist you with your time at university.

- The main part is not to worry and to think positively about this process.
The Hepp Hub: [www.hepp.ac.uk](http://www.hepp.ac.uk)

- has a lot of useful information/resources about higher education
- provides a number of links to organisations who can help support you in your journey to higher education
- hosts specific information for students with disabilities, young carers, care experienced and mature students
Let’s hear from you!

• The aim of HeppFest this year is to help you feel more confident in helping learners and to help learners feel more confident in making an informed choice about higher education.

• We are keen to understand if our session has helped with this.

• Please take 5 minutes to consider this and add any comments to chat.

Thank You
Thank you for taking the time to attend our session. Please take a couple of minutes to fill out the following evaluation.

https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/LTB9B9Z
Thank you for attending!

If you have any questions please contact us via www.hepp.ac.uk/festival where you can also book on to more free sessions.

Our careers team are also available at www.heppsy.org/chat-call-click

Hepp Contact: Kelly Self (Project Coordinator) – k.self@shu.ac.uk
Sheffield Hallam University Disability Team: disability-support@shu.ac.uk
The University of Sheffield Disability Support: disability.transitions@sheffield.ac.uk
Barnsley College HE Disability Support – j.reaney@barnsley.ac.uk