

## What is DSA?

DSAs are government grants designed to contribute towards any additional costs a student may incur whilst studying due to their disability, long term medical condition, specific learning difficulty or mental health difficulty. They are not means tested, and you do not generally have to pay them back.

## What can DSA help pay for?

DSAs are split into four different allowances:

- **Specialist Equipment Allowance:** To fund any specialist equipment or software recommended for you.
- **Non-Medical Helpers Allowance:** To fund support workers you may require such as specialist study skills tutors, communication support workers, mentors.
- **General Allowance:** This can be used to fund general study related costs, such as photocopying/printing allowance, book allowance.
- **Travel Allowance:** This can be used to contribute towards any additional study related travel costs. For example, you may use a taxi to travel between your home and the campus, rather than public transport and DSA may cover the difference.

## An overview of the DSA process

If you are eligible for DSA:

- You should apply as early as possible.
- You will need to complete the appropriate DSA application form.
- You will need to return your completed DSA application form, evidence of your disability and any other relevant documents requested to the appropriate funding authority (such as Student Finance England or NHS Bursaries).
- Your funding authority will then consider your application. (SFE approx 10 working days)
- If your application is successful, your funding authority will send you a letter advising you to arrange a Needs Assessment at an Assessment Centre.
- When you attend your Needs Assessment you will need to take with you the letter from your funding authority and evidence of your disability.

- Your Needs Assessor will send a copy of your Needs Assessment report to you, your funding authority and, where you have given your consent, to your university.
- Your funding authority will then consider the recommendations in your Needs Assessment report. (SFE approx 10 working days)
- Your funding authority will send you a letter (an award letter) advising you what funding has been agreed and how to arrange your support.

### **What evidence of my disability do I need to provide?**

You must provide evidence of your disability, long term medical condition, specific learning difficulty or mental health difficulty with your DSA application.

Evidence of your disability could be a letter from your GP, consultant, psychologist or another suitably qualified professional.

However, if you have a specific learning difficulty such as Dyslexia,

- You must provide a full educational psychologist's report which meets the SpLD Working Group 2005 DfES guidelines.
- You must have been over the age of 16 when the assessment was done. Please note a statement of Special Educational Needs or an Access Arrangements report will not be sufficient.
- You must provide your report in English.

You will be responsible for any cost involved in obtaining evidence of your disability.

Students enrolled on a course at University of West London may be eligible to apply for funding to help towards the cost of obtaining evidence of their disability (such as an Educational Psychologist's assessment). Please contact Disability Support for more information.

### **Who is eligible for DSA?**

You and the course you choose to study must be eligible in order for you to receive DSA. Please visit the relevant website (depending on your circumstances) for more information on DSA, eligibility and the appropriate application forms.

For students living in:

England: [www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance](http://www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance)

Wales: [www.studentfinancewales.co.uk](http://www.studentfinancewales.co.uk)

Northern Ireland: [www.studentfinancenir.co.uk](http://www.studentfinancenir.co.uk)

Scotland: [www.saas.gov.uk](http://www.saas.gov.uk)

For students receiving an NHS Bursary:

[www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/students](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/students)

If you are not eligible to apply for DSA, please make an appointment to see a Disability Adviser to discuss the possible alternative support available to you.

## **How long could the DSA process take?**

You are encouraged to apply as early as possible to avoid any delays. It has been known to take some considerable time from students submitting their DSA application to receiving their recommended support.

## **Useful contacts**

### **Student Finance England (SFE)**

Address: SFE, PO Box 210, Darlington, DL1 9HJ

Telephone: 0845 300 50 90

Minicom: 0845 604 44 34

(Open: Monday –Friday 8am-8pm, Saturday and Sunday 9.30am-5.30pm)

### **NHS Student Bursaries**

Address: Hesketh House, 200-220 Broadway, Fleetwood, Lancashire, FY7 8SS

### **National Network of Assessment Centres (NNAC)**

[www.nnac.org/students](http://www.nnac.org/students)

### **Skill (National Association for students with disabilities)**

[www.skill.org.uk](http://www.skill.org.uk)

Email: [info@skill.org.uk](mailto:info@skill.org.uk)

Telephone: 0800 328 5050

Textphone: 18001 0800 328 5050

SMS text service: 07786 208 028 (for young people aged 16-24)

**UKCISA (UK Council for International Student Affairs)**

More information is available for EU and international students regarding eligibility for student finance and student support.

[www.ukcisa.org.uk](http://www.ukcisa.org.uk)

Telephone: 00 44 (0)20 7107 9922

(Open: Monday - Friday 1 - 4pm)

**How do I contact Disability Support?**

You may contact us between 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday in the following ways:

- By telephone, **0208 231 2739**
- By email, **[disability.support@uwl.ac.uk](mailto:disability.support@uwl.ac.uk)**
- By letter, address to **Disability Support, One Stop Shop, University of West London, St. Mary's Road, Ealing, London, W5 5RF**
- In person, at **One Stop Shop, St Mary's Road, Ealing Campus**