



Disabled Students' Allowance Guidance

Introduction

The aim is to ensure that students receive the learning support they need, to remove disability related barriers to learning to demonstrate their full academic potential at Higher Education Level.

DSAs are considered where it has been established that the student is obliged by reason of their disability to incur additional expenditure to be able to attend or undertake their course.

Contents

	Page
Disabled Students' Allowance Guidance	3
How and When Do I Apply?	4 - 5
Specialist Equipment Allowance	6
Non-Medical Helper Allowance	7
Travel Allowance	8
General Allowance	9
For Full-time and Part-time Postgraduate Students	10
Initial Teacher Training courses (ITT)	11

Disabled Students' Allowance Guidance

As a Higher Education student living in England, you can apply for a Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) if you have a disability meeting the definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010, including a:

- Long-term health condition evidenced by a report or letter from your doctor or consultant.
- Mental health condition as evidenced by a report or letter from your doctor or consultant - you can also fill in the Mental Health Evidence form.
- Specific learning difficulty, eg dyslexia as evidenced by a 'diagnostic assessment' from a psychologist or suitably qualified specialist teacher - you'll need to get reassessed if you had this done when you were under 16. You could get extra help to pay for a new diagnostic assessment.

You must also:

- be an undergraduate or postgraduate student (including Open University or distance learning)
- have a condition that affects your ability to study
- qualify for student finance from Student Finance England
- be studying on a course that lasts at least a year

Your course must be in the UK and one of the following:

- a First Degree, e.g. BA, BSc or BEd
- a Foundation Degree
- a Certificate of Higher Education
- a Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE)
- a Higher National Certificate (HNC)
- a Higher National Diploma (HND)
- a Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE)
- a Postgraduate Course
- Initial Teacher Training

For part-time students, your course intensity can affect how much you get

'Course intensity' means how long your course takes to complete each year compared to an equivalent full-time course. You can check course intensity with your university or college.

How and When Do I Apply?

Step 1

- It's now time to apply online for student finance. You can click on the option to apply for Disabled Students' Allowances in your main Higher Education finance application. They will then send you a shortened version of the DSA application form (DSASL) to fill in and return to Student Finance England, PO Box 210, Darlington, DL1 9HJ. You can download the shortened form from www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas
- If you're only applying for DSAs and no other form of student finance, download the long DSA application form (DSA1F) from www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas Fill this in and return it to Student Finance England, PO Box 210, Darlington, DL1 9HJ.
- Telephone 0300 100 0607 or by textphone on 0300 100 0622.

Step 2

If you're eligible for DSAs Student Finance England will write to you to tell you to arrange a needs assessment to find out exactly what equipment and support you need.

Step 3

You should book your needs assessment as soon as you get their letter telling you to arrange one. To find your nearest approved needs assessment centre, go to www.dsa-qag.org.uk

Step 4

Once Student Finance England get the results of your needs assessment, they will write to you to let you know if DSAs can pay for any specialist equipment and other support recommended in your needs assessment. They'll also give you instructions for ordering equipment. Please contact the Student Financial & Travel Support Manager at South Downs College at this point to arrange an interview to discuss your needs assessment. Telephone 023 9279 7969 or email studentfinanceandtravel@southdowns.ac.uk

Step 5

- Order your equipment and arrange your other support as soon as you get your entitlement letter.
- However, be sure to not purchase your equipment before you receive your entitlement letter.

Step 6

Start your course.

Step 7

Re-apply for your student finance and for DSA before the start of your course each year.

Specialist Equipment Allowance

What's it for?

- To help you buy any major items of specialist equipment you need because of your disability, long-term health condition, mental-health condition or specific learning difficulty.
- You can also use it to pay for repairs, technical support, insurance or extended warranty costs arising from owning that equipment.

Do I have to pay it back?

No, even if you leave your course early. As long as you have registered and attended at least one day of your course, you would not have to repay for any of the equipment even if you do leave the course early, unless you received the equipment after you had left.

How much can I get?

Full-time and part-time students can get up to £5,212 for the whole course. How much you can get doesn't depend on your income or that of your family, but does depend on your needs assessment.

Anything else?

- The amount shown is the maximum you can get. It's aimed at supporting those with a high level of need, so most people will get less.
- We might pay the cost of renting rather than buying items of equipment if this is more economical.
- The money will be paid direct to the equipment supplier or (in some circumstances) into your bank account.
- If you need more help or advice, you can contact us by telephone 0300 100 0607 or by textphone on 0300 100 0622.

Non-Medical Helper Allowance

What's it for?

To help pay for support workers such as readers, sign-language interpreters, notetakers, specialist one-to-one support and other non-medical assistants you need to use to benefit fully from your course.

Do I have to pay it back?

No, however if you leave your course early you'll have to pay back any payments you might get after you leave.

How can a non-medical helper help me?

The type of non-medical help you get will depend on your individual needs, but your support workers should have a good understanding of the support you need and be reliable and trustworthy. To get the most effective help possible from your support worker, you should let them know if you have any specific requirements, for example if you have a note taker you should let them know what font and text size is best for you. You should also give them a copy of your timetable and let them know if any class times or rooms change.

How much can I get?

How much you get doesn't depend on your income or that of your family, but does depend on your needs assessment. The table below shows the maximum amount of help available for this year.

Full-time	Up to £20,725
Part-time	A percentage of the full-time amount, depending on how intensive the part-time course is, up to £15,543

Anything else?

- The amounts shown above are the maximum available. It's aimed at supporting those with a high level of need, so most people will get less.
- The money will be paid direct to the supplier of the service (for example, your university or college or a support agency) or (in some circumstances) into your bank account.
- If you need more help or advice, you can telephone 0300 100 0607 or textphone on 0300 100 0622.

Travel Allowance

What's it for?

To help with any extra travel costs you may have to pay to attend your university or college because of your disability (for example, if you need to take a taxi because your disability prevents you from taking public transport).

You won't be eligible for help with everyday travel costs which any student would expect to pay and you may have to provide receipts.

Do I have to pay it back?

No, unless you leave your course early, in which case you may be asked to pay some back.

How much can I get?

Full-time and part-time students can get reasonable spending on extra travel costs. How much you get doesn't depend on your income or that of your family but does depend on your needs assessment.

Anything else?

The money will be paid direct to the supplier of the services (for example, a taxi firm) or into your bank account. If you're claiming using a 'reimbursement of costs form', available from www.gov.uk/studentfinance remember to keep any receipts or invoices as evidence.

If you need more help or advice, you can telephone 0300 100 0607 or textphone on 0300 100 0622.

General Allowance

What's it for?

To help pay other disability and course-related costs. You can use it to buy items such as print cartridges and Braille paper, or to top up the specialist equipment and non-medical helper allowances if necessary.

Do I have to pay it back?

No, unless you leave your course early, in which case you may be asked to pay some back.

Anything else?

- The amounts shown are the maximum available. You can also use this allowance to pay any travel expenses for attending your needs assessment.
- The money is refunded to your bank account when you supply a receipt.
- If you need more help or advice, you can telephone 0300 100 0607 or by textphone on 0300 100 0622.

How much can I get?

- How much you get doesn't depend on your income or that of your family, but does depend on your needs assessment.
- The information below shows the maximum amount of help available for this year.

Full-time	Up to £1,741
Part-time	A percentage of the full-time amount to a maximum of £1,305 a year depending on how intensive the course is

For Full-time and Part-time Postgraduate Students

For both full-time and part-time postgraduate students there's a single allowance of up to £10,362 a year.

You can use this for specialist equipment, non-medical helpers, extra travel costs or other course related costs.

The amount of DSAs you get will depend on your needs assessment. Generally postgraduate students will not need to attend a needs assessment if they have already had one when studying at undergraduate level.

Only one needs assessment is funded through DSAs unless your needs change significantly.

Attending a second needs assessment without prior confirmation will not be funded by SFE.

Students on PGCE courses can apply for the DSAs awarded to undergraduates and so won't be eligible for postgraduate DSAs.

Initial Teacher Training Courses (ITT)

If you're already on an ITT course, you can continue to apply for the same package of DSAs support you've had in previous years.

Students who started a full-time ITT course on or after 1 September 2010 can apply for the full-time support package, including the full-time DSAs package. Students who started a part-time ITT course on or after 1 September 2010 can apply for the standard part-time student support package, including part-time DSAs.

Benefits:

- Most full-time students can't get income-related benefits such as Universal Credit, income-based Employment, Support Allowance or Housing Benefit (unless the student has a hearing impairment).
- However, certain groups (including single parents, student couples with dependent children and some disabled students) may be able to get income related benefits while they're studying.
- Jobcentre Plus and your local authority's Housing Benefit section will take account of most of any Maintenance Loan (and some student grants) you're entitled to. The Special Support Grant and DSAs won't be taken into account.
- There's a free and confidential Benefit Enquiry Line for people with disabilities and their carers. The number is 0800 882 200 (textphone: 0800 243 355).

**A community of excellence delivering
outstanding opportunities inspiring
and enabling all to fulfil their
potential**


Correct at the time of printing April 2015


Principal: Mike Gaston

South Downs College

College Road
Waterlooville
Hampshire
PO7 8AA

The South Downs College has
charitable status for the provision
of Education and Training

 023 9279 7979

 023 9279 4630

 college@southdowns.ac.uk

 www.southdowns.ac.uk

 [SouthDownsCollege](https://www.facebook.com/SouthDownsCollege)

 [SDC_Voice](https://twitter.com/SDC_Voice)



European Union
European Social Fund
Investing in jobs and skills