

Disabled Students' Allowances

Student Finance Fact Sheet (FS05)



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 or order by calling us 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.

The table below shows the help available and the maximum amounts for 2011/12.

Specialist equipment allowance - helps buy any equipment you might need.	Up to £5,161 for the whole course
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
General allowance - helps pay for other disability related spending such as print cartridges.	Up to £1,724 a year
Travel allowance - helps with any extra travel costs you may have to pay to attend your university or college because of your disability	Reasonable spending on extra travel costs you may have to pay to attend your university or college course because of your disability.

How do I apply for DSAs?

Step 1

If you have already completed an application form for student finance and indicated that you want to apply for DSAs, we will send a DSA application (DSA1) to you. If you are only applying for DSAs, you can download the application form from www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance. You should return this to us, with evidence of your disability, mental-health condition or specific learning difficulty. The evidence you need to send will depend on your condition.

Step 2

We will assess your application and send you a letter to let you know if you qualify for DSAs.

Step 3

When we contact you to tell you if you're eligible for DSAs you will be asked to arrange a needs assessment to identify the help you need on your course. 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.

Step 4

You will receive a report which identifies the types of equipment and other support you will need, how much it will cost, and where to get it from.

Step 5

We will send you a letter to tell you whether any specialist equipment and other support that has been recommended in your needs assessment can be paid for from DSAs. We will also give you instructions for ordering equipment or arranging other support.

Step 6

The money will be paid directly to the supplier of the equipment or service.

Remember: if you are applying for DSAs only, you will have to re-apply each year of your course.