



Advice guide 1: Applying for Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) through Student Finance England

What are Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs)?

DSAs help to pay for any extra costs to cover a student's support needs arising as a result of their disability. These may include specialist equipment and software, non-medical helper support (e.g. study skills tuition, mentoring), general expenses and travel costs.

Will the student have to pay this back?

The allowance is not means-tested, it is not repayable, it does not affect benefits and there is no age limit. The funding is administered through Student Finance England, Wales, Scotland or other funding body, such as a research council.

How does the student know if they are eligible?

The student has to be on a full-time or part-time undergraduate course (degree, HND level, or Foundation Degree). They may also qualify if they are on a full-time or part-time postgraduate course. The student has to be able to evidence that they have a disability (e.g. medical condition, long term illness, physical impairment, sensory impairment, mental health condition or a specific learning difficulty) which impacts on their ability to study

A student cannot receive Disabled Students' Allowances if they are:

- accessing support equivalent to DSAs from another funding provider
- an EU/International student
- undertaking a full year, paid work placement as part of a sandwich-course.
- accessing more than one course at the same time

How does the student apply for DSAs?

The student will need to complete a DSA application. They can access this via <https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas/how-to-claim> They will need to submit medical evidence of their disability along with their application. This needs to come from a medical professional i.e. GP, consultant, Psychiatrist. The evidence must clearly state:

- Diagnosis
- How long their condition has had an impact/is likely to have an impact (must be long term).
- Examples of how their condition impacts on them currently on a daily basis.





The evidence can be in the form of a letter or the student may wish to take a pro forma with them to their appointment. This can be accessed via

http://media.slc.co.uk/sfe/nysf/sfe_dsa_disability_evidence_form.pdf

For a Specific Learning Difficulty (e.g. Dyslexia), the evidence needed is different:

A full diagnostic assessment is required: carried out by an educational psychologist or a suitably qualified specialist teacher holding a current Assessment Practicing Certificate. The report should use the format and tests recommended in The SpLD Assessment Standards Committee [SASC] 2013 Testing and Assessment Guidance Document, which can be found at the following link:

<http://www.sasc.org.uk/>

If the student does not already have this evidence or has a different type of evidence, they will need to contact studentlife@tees.ac.uk or book a Quick Query appointment to discuss this by emailing studentlife@tees.ac.uk. An adviser will then be able to consider their evidence and if necessary support the student with gaining a full diagnostic assessment as above. Students with more than one disability/ condition, appropriate evidence of both will need to be submitted.

Submitting a completed DSA application

Once a student has completed their application and has all the evidence they need, they will need to send this to:

Student Finance England
PO Box 210
Darlington DL1 9HJ

Or they can email this to dsa_team@slc.co.uk. The student can contact their Disability Adviser if they require support with their application.

What happens after the student has applied for DSA?

The student will receive a letter from Student Finance England confirming whether their application has been accepted or rejected. If their evidence is accepted, they will be asked to book a Study Needs Assessment. The student should refer to the help sheet on 'Arranging a Study Needs Assessment' for information and guidance on how to do this. If their evidence is rejected, the student can contact their Disability Adviser who can provide support with gaining additional medical evidence.

For more information

W: <https://www.tees.ac.uk/sections/stud/disability>

E: studentlife@tees.ac.uk

T: 01642 342277

