

The Road to Higher Education



Directions to the
Disabled Students
Allowances (DSAs)

Introduction

This leaflet will cover:-

- What are DSAs?
- What can DSAs be used for?
- How can I apply for DSAs?
- Where can I get help and advice?
- What next?
- Student profiles
- Useful contact numbers and addresses

More information can be found in "Bridging the gap: a guide to the DSAs in Higher Education".

To order a copy, call **0800 731 9133**.

Or download it from the DFES website:

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/studentssupport/uploads/Bridgingthegap2006.doc>

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/studentssupport/uploads/bridgingthegap2006.pdf>



What are DSAs?

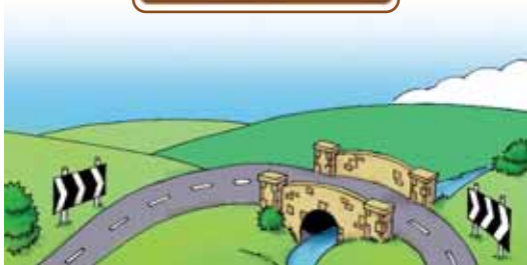
DSAs stands for Disabled Students Allowances.

These allowances are available for UK students applying for full-time and substantial part-time courses in higher education.

The DSAs help pay for extra costs in attending a course as a direct result of a disability.

'Disability' is a broad category which includes, for instance, dyslexia.

The DSAs do not depend on your family's income and do not have to be repaid.

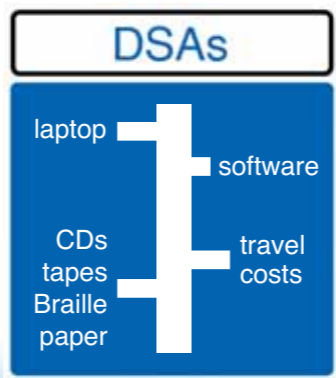


What can DSAs be used for?

Depending on your assessment, the DSAs may:

- help with the cost of a non-medical helper, such as a note taker or sign language interpreter
- pay for specialist equipment like a laptop or Dictaphone
- pay for specialist software and technical support
- pay for items such as audio CDs, tapes or Braille paper
- pay for any extra travel costs arising from a disability.

Current maximum rates for DSAs can be found in "Bridging the gap: a guide to the DSAs in Higher Education". (See page 2 for details of how to order or download this.)



How can I apply for DSAs?

If you are entering higher education for the first time and are applying to your Local Authority for financial support, you will fill in a form PN1 or an on-line form at

www.studentfinancedirect.co.uk.

You will find that the application form asks if you have a disability.

Show you are interested in claiming DSAs by stating you have a disability. Give details of the nature of the disability. If you have an assessment of your disability, give the date. You will be asked to send evidence of your disability in the form of a medical letter or, for instance, a dyslexia assessment. You can do this later if you need to.

Don't delay sending off the form if you don't have evidence available straight away.



Where can I get help and advice?

You may want to get advice about the process of claiming DSAs from people with experience of supporting students in your situation.

- Contact the Disability Officer at your chosen university or college. They may also be called Learning Support, Student Support or Disability Advisor.
- It would be a good idea to contact them in the spring before your course starts, even before you have to fill in your student finance form. As well as advice about claiming DSAs, they'll also be able to give you information about the range of support they offer to students with disabilities, dyslexia, other specific learning differences or additional support needs.
- Ideally, you should apply for the DSAs several months before the course starts. This ensures that appropriate support can be identified and arranged in time for the start of your course. However, you may apply at any stage of your course.



What next?

Once the Local Authority has confirmed your eligibility for DSAs, they will then ask you to have a DSAs assessment of need. This will identify what extra support you may need. The assessment is free.

Contact the disability support service at your chosen university or college who will be able to help with this process. They will also be able to arrange the extra support for you.



Student profile 1

Emma - BA Creative Arts

Emma has a complex language and communication disorder. She finds it difficult to speak to other people, including one-to-one and gets particularly anxious in groups and when meeting people for the first time. Emma lives with her parents and found coming to university very challenging.

The disability support office worked with Emma's local authority to speed up her application for DSAs. With the DSAs in place, the university was able to appoint a highly qualified support worker who works with Emma in the role of mentor, note-taker and study skills tutor. With this support Emma has gradually developed strategies to become an active and effective member of her course and has maintained a high 2.1 average.

Emma maintains that this would not have been possible without the continued support provided by her DSAs.



Student profile 2

Katie has very little hearing. She lip reads but finds it difficult to take notes and lip read at the same time.

After meeting with support staff, Katie's lecturers were instructed in some of the obvious things, like facing Katie when speaking. The outlines of most lectures are now published on the university's intranet which helps. To supplement this, Katie used note takers from the local Deaf Association in her first year. As the course progressed, she began to use post-graduate note-takers who were more used to the academic rigour. These were paid out of her DSAs.

Katie was also able to purchase a closed caption video recorder.

All equipment bought with DSAs remains your property. However, if you abandon your course, the Local Authority might have to recover some or all of your DSAs.



Useful contacts

SKILL

The National Bureau for Students
with Disabilities
Chapter House
18-20 Crucifix Lane
London
SE1 3JW

Information and Guidance
Phone: **0800 3285050**
Minicom: **0800 0682422**
<http://www.skill.org.uk>

British Dyslexia Association

98 London Road
Reading
Berkshire
RG1 5AU

Phone: **0118 966 2677**
<http://www.bda-dyslexia.org.uk>

Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB)

105 Judd Street
WC1H 9NE

Phone: **0845 766 9999**
<http://www.rnib.org.uk/student>

RNIB Bristol

Stillhouse lane
Bedminster
Bristol
BS3 4EB

Phone: **0117 953 7751**

Useful contacts

Royal National Institute for the Deaf (RNID)

19-23 Featherstone Street,
London
EC1Y 8SL

Phone: 020 7296 8000

Textphone: 020 7296 8001

Email: information@rnid.org.uk

Confidential information lines (Freephone)

Tel: 0808 808 0123

Textphone: 0808 808 9000

Disability Rights Commission (DRC)

Freepost MID 02164
Stratford-upon-Avon
CV37 9HY

Phone: 08457 622633

<http://www.drc-gb.org>

Mind

P.O. Box 277
Manchester
M60 3XN

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

Phone: MindinfoLine 0845 766 0163

Email: info@mind.org.uk

Aimhigher West Area Partnership Disability Strand

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

You have reached
your destination

Notes

For extra copies or copies in alternative formats please contact Mike Bell

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