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Further information is also available  
on-line at [www.studentfinancen.co.uk](http://www.studentfinancen.co.uk)

# DISABLED STUDENTS' ALLOWANCE (DSA)



**Assistance for students  
with a disability**



## What is Disabled Students' Allowance?

DSA is a grant to help pay for additional higher education study-related costs you may have to incur as a direct result of your disability, mental-health condition (such as depression or anxiety) or specific learning difficulty (such as dyslexia or dyspraxia).

Please note that the amount of DSA you can get does not depend on your income or that of your family, but it will depend on your needs assessment, reflecting your individual needs and will be subject to the approval of the Education Authority.

### **Types of Support Available**

There is a single DSA allowance of up to £25,000 a year towards course-related costs for both full-time and part-time undergraduate students and postgraduate students.

**1. Specialist Equipment Allowance** - To help with equipment you may need because of your disability, mental-health condition or specific learning difficulty. It can also be used to pay for technical support, insurance or extended warranty costs arising from owning that equipment. In most cases the money will be paid directly to the equipment supplier on your behalf.

**2. Non-Medical Helper Allowance** - To help pay for support workers, such as readers, sign-language interpreters, note-takers and other non-medical assistants you need, to benefit fully from your course. The money will be paid directly to the supplier of the services.

**3. General Allowance** - To help pay for additional miscellaneous costs you may incur e.g. photocopying or ink cartridges. Receipts must be retained and forwarded to your local EA Office to enable refunds to be made throughout the year.

**4. Travel Allowance** - to help pay for any additional travel costs to and from the Institution which are incurred because of your disability.

## Am I eligible for DSA?

Eligibility for DSA generally follows eligibility for Student Finance, although there are additional, specific eligibility criteria.

- You must be undertaking an approved course e.g. Degree, HND, PGCE, or PG Cert, PG Dip, MSc or PhD.
- DSA is available to eligible students regardless of age.
- DSA is not means-tested.
- Previous study will not affect your eligibility for DSA.
- You must be able to provide up to date evidence of your disability, mental health condition or specific learning difficulty and how it affects your academic performance
- EU students are not eligible for DSA.

## How Do I Apply?

**Step 1** Complete a DSA1 application form and send to the DSA Officer at your local Student Finance Office, along with evidence of your disability, long-term health condition, mental health condition or specific learning difficulty. (Please note all Part Time and Post Grad DSA is processed in our Ballymena office).

**Step 2** Once the DSA Officer has received your form and supporting medical evidence, they will assess your application and send you a letter to let you know if you qualify for DSA and advise you on the next steps.

**Step 3** Make an appointment with the Disability Services at your Institution who will arrange for a Needs Assessment to be carried out to determine what help and support you require. You will need to provide them with a copy of your medical evidence or Educational Psychologists report.

*You can download a DSA1 application form and Disability Evidence Form if required at [www.studentfinanceneni.co.uk](http://www.studentfinanceneni.co.uk). You can get versions in large print, in Braille and on audio by phoning our publication line on 0141 243 3686.*

**Step 4** On receipt of the Needs Assessment your EA Office will inform you of your award that has been approved and the procedure for ordering any equipment and accessing your support.

## FAQs

### **1. Can I apply if my disability is identified after I start my course?**

Students may become eligible for DSA at any point during their course, not just at the start of their course. Some students become disabled or have a disability identified after their course has started.

### **2. Can I receive equipment before my course starts?**

Yes, it is important that you contact your Institution in order to have a Needs Assessment carried out as early as possible. Payments will not be released until the EA receives official confirmation that you have accepted a definite offer of a place on your course.

### **3. If I am not registered disabled am I still entitled to apply for DSA funding?**

Yes, you will be able to apply for DSA even though you are not registered disabled.

### **4. What should I do if I am not happy with the way my claim has been dealt with?**

If you are not satisfied with the outcome or the way your claim has been dealt with by your local EA Office, you should make contact with them. If the outcome is still not satisfactory request a copy of their appeals/complaints procedure.