

A guide to

Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) in England

If you are going to be, or already are, a university student in the UK, then you can apply for extra support.

Who is eligible?

Those with: a mental health diagnosis, specific learning difficulties, long-term health conditions, or any other disability.

Find out more

Additional criteria also applies.

Visit: **gov.uk/disabled-student-allowances-dsas** to check out the full list.

The basics about DSAs

- DSAs cover some of the extra costs you have because of a mental health condition, long term illness or any other disability
- DSAs cover support and equipment for academic study
- DSA support is in addition to your other student finance loans and is not means tested
- DSA funding does not need to be repaid

What do DSAs help to pay for?

- Help with course-related costs a student may have as a direct result of their disability
- Help to fund equipment and assistive technology
- Help pay for non-medical helpers such as BSL interpreters
- Extra study-related travel costs

How will I receive DSA support?

Funds can be given in different ways but typically Student Finance England pay directly for your equipment or services.

Hear from our students

– Noor, 4th year Medical Student, UEA



“The dictaphone, printer and computer I received were very important to my learning. As my laptop was quite old, I was able to get a new one through DSA which could take on the new software that I needed. I had several softwares to help me to make mindmaps and notes which I found really useful. Having a laptop to take to my lectures also helped me to make notes quickly.

On top of this, having a dictaphone really helped me to go back to my notes after the lecture and fill in any additional information that I missed at the time. As I prefer to learn from paper rather than the computer, having the printer allowed me to print off my notes and use it in my revision.”

What do DSAs not pay for?

- Doesn't pay for study costs that **all** students might have
- Doesn't pay for disability-related costs that you would have whether you were at university or not. If you need personal assistance on a daily basis, (e.g. getting dressed) you should be able to get help through your local social services department

How do I apply?

- Apply online through your student finance account
- Apply nice and early to ensure your support is in place by the time your course begins (If you develop a condition or receive a diagnosis during your degree, you can apply then too)
- You will need to provide some evidence of your condition or diagnosis
- You'll be told if you need to arrange a needs assessment (a meeting with a specialist adviser who can talk to you about equipment and support that may help you during your studies)

The cost of the assessment is charged later on to your DSA allowance, so you don't have to pay with your own money.

Hear from our students

– Becca, 2nd year International Development student, UEA



“It’s worth it. 100%. I was worried about how much money I would have to spend on things, but once you pay the flat fee* everything else is paid by through DSA: laptops, printers, support sessions, everything! It made me feel less stressful about my first year and how things would work like printing or note taking in lectures.”

*students contribute a flat fee of £200 to the cost of a new laptop.

For more help and advice

General Information

GOV UK DSA info: gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas

UCAS DSA info: ucas.com/disabled-students-allowances-dsas

University-Specific Information

- Universities provide lots of specialist staff to make sure students have the information and support they need
- Contact the student services or disability advice team at your chosen university if you have questions about the support you need from them

UEA Student Services: studentsupport@uea.ac.uk

If you're not going to university just yet but would still like to find out more...

- We're keen to support young people with disabilities to feel confident about considering university in the future
- We know that going to university causes more worries for some students than others, so if you haven't already applied to university and you've got questions or concerns about something in particular, contact UEA's Outreach team at: IncludingMe@uea.ac.uk
- For more information visit: uea.ac.uk/includingme

If you require this guide in an alternative format, email: includingme@uea.ac.uk

Frequently asked questions answered by UEA students

How did you find out about Disabled Students Allowances?

“I was aware of it through my friend who also has Dyslexia, but you can also find out when you are applying student finance, make sure you look into whether you are eligible for it.”

Noor

What was it like to apply for DSA?

“The process is relatively straightforward, however there are lengthy forms that you have to fill out, but it’s so worth it. Once you apply, you get transferred to a different company in your local area who then take on your application.”

Becca

Did you apply before your course began, or after you arrived at UEA?

“I applied after I arrived at UEA.”

Noor

“Both, I’ve had two assessments, the first was before I arrived at UEA and once I was approved it got passed onto the student support team who contacted me immediately and asked if I had anything else they could do for me. Secondly, in May 2020 for my newly diagnosed dyslexia which was done over the phone.”

Becca

If I receive DSA, will everyone at my university know?

“DSA will ask if you want to share information about your support with Student Services at UEA. Student Services will then obtain your consent to share information with relevant people in the University; such as your Academic adviser.”

Becca