

Disabled Students' Allowance

You do not have to be disabled to claim Disabled Students' Allowances. You can apply if you have dyslexia or other health conditions (see below). This guide gives you an idea of whether you are eligible and how the process works.

What are DSAs?

Disabled Students Allowances (DSA) are additional support for students who have a:

- Learning difficulty, for example dyslexia, dyspraxia or ADHD
- Mental health condition like anxiety or depression
- Physical disability, for example if you have to use crutches
- Sensory disability, for example if you're partially sighted or have a hearing impairment
- Long-term health condition such as sickle cell disease, diabetes, cancer, chronic heart disease or HIV

What kind of support is available?

You can get help with the costs of:

- Specialist equipment and assistive technology, for example an ergonomic chair, specialist software and a computer if you need one because of your disability
- Non-medical helpers (such as a one-to-one Study Skills tutor or Specialist Mentor)
- Extra travel because of your disability
- Other disability-related costs of studying

You may get a new computer if you don't already have one, or your current one doesn't meet your study needs. More information will be provided to you if you're assessed as needing a new computer.

How do I show that I am eligible?

You have to send your funding body (usually Student Finance England) proof of your disability or specific learning difficulty. This may be a letter from your GP or specialist confirming the diagnosis of your condition. It should also state that your difficulties are long term and how they affect you. Alternatively, you can ask them to complete the Disability Evidence form, which you can download here:

<https://tinyurl.com/Disability-Evidence-Form>

If you have a specific learning difficulty (such as dyslexia or dyspraxia) you will need to send a full diagnostic assessment report. If you think that you may be dyslexic but have not had a full assessment, then you should contact your disability advisor.

At Middlesex, they can be contacted at:

disability@mdx.ac.uk

I am a part-time/postgraduate student am I still eligible?

You will still be able to apply for DSA if you are part-time or postgraduate but you will have to reapply for DSA each year to ensure your support continues.

What eligibility criteria should I meet?

As well as showing evidence of your disability or specific learning difficulty; you must also meet the residency criteria and be studying on a course that lasts at least a year.

How do I apply?

Full-time undergraduate students who are in receipt of a student loan can apply on line by logging in to your Student Finance account. The application for DSAs should be on your 'to-do list'. If it isn't, select 'change your circumstances' to apply.

If you are part-time or postgraduate you can download a form here:

<https://tinyurl.com/DSA1-Form>

and guidance notes here:

<https://tinyurl.com/DSA1-Notes>

Student Finance England
PO Box 210
Darlington
DL1 9HJ

Or email it to
dsa_team@slc.co.uk

What happens next?

Your funding body (usually SFE or the NHS) will send you an email and/or letter advising you to book a study needs assessment. You can request for a remote or in-person meeting. This is an informal meeting with a study needs assessor who will talk through your difficulties with you and discuss strategies to help overcome the impact of your disability.

What happens during the DSA study needs assessment appointment?

During the appointment the assessor will discuss the effects of your disability and recommend support strategies. They will write a Study Needs Assessment Report (NAR), which will be sent to your funding body for approval. If you are recommended assistive software you will also have the opportunity to receive training on this. You may also require one-to-one Study Skills or Specialist Mentoring.

This will usually be arranged by your disability advisor.

What happens next?

You should receive an entitlement letter (DSA2) advising you to order any equipment you have been recommended. If you are funded by SFE, they will pay the supplier directly. If you are funded by the NHS they will pay you and you have to pay the equipment supplier.

The letter will advise you how to contact your specialist support supplier, if applicable.

Do students have to pay £200 towards the cost of a computer?

Yes, you may be able to get help with this cost if you are an undergraduate, are in receipt of the maximum student loan and you can't afford to pay this yourself.

For details of the maximum student loan, see Welfare Advice Guide: 2023-24 'New Full-Time Students'

Useful Contacts

Student Welfare Advice Team

email: welfare@mdx.ac.uk

020 8411 3008

Disability and Dyslexia Support

Sunny Hill House

email: disability@mdx.ac.uk

020 8411 5366

Middlesex University Student Welfare Advice Team has made every effort to ensure that the information contained in this leaflet is accurate. Middlesex University however, cannot be held responsible for any omissions or errors. This publication can only be a guide and is not intended to replace the complex and diverse legislation covered.

Statutes and regulations may change during the year without notice. If in Doubt, seek independent advice.

April 2024