
STUDY YOUR WAY with DSA

Disabled Student's Allowance (DSA)
Explained

Study Your Way with DSA

Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA) Explained

What are Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA or DSAs)?

Disabled Students' Allowances is often abbreviated to Disabled Students' Allowance, DSA or DSAs. DSA is government funding which may be provided to support you with your academic difficulties as a direct result of your diagnosed disability, Specific Learning Difference and/or medical condition. DSA pays for assistive technology, human support (known as Non-Medical Help or abbreviated to NMH) and additional costs you have as a result of your difficulties. DSA is totally separate from the funding you get through the standard student finance package from your funding authority. It is not means-tested which means that DSA does not depend on your individual or household income. You do not need to pay any DSA funding back and you do not need return any equipment back to the suppliers or your funding authority at the end of your programme of study. Any equipment approved is yours to keep at the end of your course. When DSA is approved, no actual money is supplied to you as any equipment or human support (NMH) is paid for directly by your funding authority and this comes out of your DSA allowances.

Study Your Way with DSA

Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA) Explained

The Different Funding Authorities

Most DSAs are managed and funded through a funding authority called Student Finance England if you live in England. However there are other funding authorities for DSA depending on where your home address is. There are different funding authorities and funding arrangements if you live in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, or if you are living offshore but within the British Isles such as the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.

Please see [Additional Information about Disabled Students' Allowances \(DSA\) 'Links to other Funding Authorities'](#).

Study Your Way with DSA

Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA) Explained

Eligibility

Who is eligible for DSA?

You may be eligible for DSA if you have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities as stated under the Equality Act 2010.

These may include a diagnosis or diagnoses of:

- A learning difference, for example dyslexia or ADHD
- A mental health condition like anxiety or depression
- A physical disability, for example if you are partially sighted or have to use crutches
- A long-term health condition such as cancer, chronic heart disease or HIV
- Autistic Spectrum Disorder or Asperger Syndrome

Please see [Additional Information about Disabled Students' Allowances \(DSA\) 'Additional Information about Eligibility'](#)

Study Your Way with DSA

Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA) Explained

Examples of what DSAs may pay for include:

- Assistive technology and specialist equipment, for example a computer if you need one because of your disability
- Assistive technology training to enable effective use of equipment
- Non-Medical Help support (Support workers such as a Specialist Mentor or Specialist 1:1 Study Support worker)
- Extra travel costs because of your disability
- Other disability-related costs of studying

Some Non-Medical Helpers such as Manual Notetakers and Study Assistants are now the responsibility of universities to provide and pay for rather than being funded through DSAs. Your University Wellbeing Advisor can discuss this with you.

This document looks at the steps in the DSA process and covers the following:

- Applying for DSA
- What happens after I have applied for DSA?
- Booking a Needs Assessment
- Your Needs Assessment/meeting
- Summary of what happens after your Needs Assessment/meeting
- Useful links for additional information

Study Your Way with DSA

Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA) Explained

Applying for DSA

When you apply for DSA you must send evidence of your diagnosis with the application. The evidence must state that you have:

- A physical, sensory or mental disability which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities (including education) A photocopy of a signed and dated report or letter from your doctor or consultant is usually acceptable.

Alternative evidence may be for a:

- Specific Learning Difference (SpLD) like dyslexia. A photocopy of a 'diagnostic assessment' from a practitioner Psychologist or suitably qualified Specialist Teacher is usually acceptable.

If you are a University of Lincoln student, the Student Wellbeing Team can help you apply for DSA and send in your application to your funding authority with your evidence, unless you have to apply yourself online or via your NHS account. Follow this link to find out about how Student Wellbeing can help:

Study Your Way with DSA

Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA) Explained

What happens after I have applied for DSA?

After you have applied for DSA, sometime later after your application has been processed by your funding authority (e.g. Student Finance England), you will be informed by your funding authority (by letter) whether or not your application and evidence have been accepted for DSA. This letter will be sent to the address your funding authority has on record for you. This letter is commonly known as a DSA 1 letter. This letter is really important as you will need it to go on to the next stage of the DSA process, so keep it safe in your emails or print a copy.

If your application has been declined, your funding authority will let you know why and what you need to do. This may be because you need to provide more evidence for example. It is important to act on the advice from your funding authority as it may be something really simple that you need to do to get your application for DSA accepted.

Study Your Way with DSA

Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA) Explained

What happens after I have applied for DSA?

When your application has been accepted for DSA, your funding authority will advise you in your DSA 1 letter about what to do. They often send out a new DSA 1 letter as an update to inform you of what you need to do, if there has been a change in their decision about your DSA application. An example of this would be when your application has been accepted after it was initially declined.

If your DSA application has been accepted, your DSA 1 letter will state which medical conditions, disabilities and /or learning differences have been accepted for DSA. It will also advise you about the three steps of what will happen next:

- You need to book a Needs Assessment at an assessment centre of your choice.
- You should attend the Needs Assessment appointment given to you by the assessment centre and discuss with the Needs Assessor the disability related support you may need for your academic studies. The Needs Assessor makes the recommendations and writes a report which they send to you and to your funding authority for their consideration and approval

Study Your Way with DSA

Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA) Explained

What happens after I have applied for DSA?

- Your funding authority reviews the recommendations in the report and then writes to you with their final decision and approval of support. This letter is commonly called a DSA 2 letter or 'Notification of Entitlement'. This letter is really important too as you will need it to go on to the next stage of the DSA process, so keep it safe in your emails or print a copy.

Study Your Way with DSA

Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA) Explained

Booking a Needs Assessment

You can book a Needs Assessment at any number of assessment centres across the country. Most are in the larger towns or cities and some are in, or in close proximity to universities. Needs Assessments are really just a meeting with a Needs Assessor. They are nothing to worry about and there is nothing you need to do to prepare for it. Your Needs Assessment Centre (NAC) will advise you about whether it is appropriate for you to be accompanied by a relative or friend. It is important to remember that, whichever Needs Assessment Centre you attend, you will need to make contact with or return to the same one for any queries, updates or reviews. These are the funding authority's rules. When you book a needs assessment, the assessment centre will advise you about what paperwork you need to provide before your assessment. This may include your medical evidence and information about any computer (laptop or desktop) you exclusively own at the time. It is very important that you supply the assessment centre with this information before your Needs Assessment as it is needed by the assessor and your assessment may be cancelled if you do not provide it before your assessment.

Follow this link for information

about booking a Needs Assessment:

<https://dsa-qag.org.uk/students/find-assessment-centre>

Student
Wellbeing
Centre



UNIVERSITY OF
LINCOLN

Study Your Way with DSA

Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA) Explained

Your Needs Assessment/Meeting

Your Needs Assessment may take between 1 to 3 hours and will give you the opportunity to talk to the Needs Assessor about what you find difficult as a result of your learning differences/medical conditions or disabilities. The meeting will cover any difficulties you may have with different academic activities including:

- Researching information
- Writing and composing assignments
- Proof reading your work
- How you take notes
- Your time management skills
- Special arrangements you may need in exams, tests and practical work
- Your communication skills
- Mobility issues

Study Your Way with DSA

Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA) Explained

Your Needs Assessment/Meeting

Some assistive technology will be discussed and demonstrated to you, such as text to speech software, mind mapping software and note taking solutions. The assessment/meeting will not involve 'teaching' you how the technology works as you will be given the option of having training with any approved assistive technology as part of your DSA package at a later date. The Needs Assessor will also discuss with you any human support (known as Non-Medical Help or abbreviated to NMH) that you may need whilst studying in Higher Education. If this is recommended, the Needs Assessor will explain how the NMH works to support you with your studies.

There may also be a discussion with you about any additional allowances you may benefit from during your studies, such as allowances for additional printing ink and paper for example. You will also be given the opportunity to ask any questions about how DSA works. After the assessment/meeting your Needs Assessor should explain what will happen next.

Study Your Way with DSA

Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA) Explained

Your Needs Assessment/Meeting

Don't worry about not remembering information and recommendations in the Needs Assessment. You will be sent a copy of your Needs Assessment Report (abbreviated to NAR) either electronically or in hard copy format at a later date. This will outline all the main points and recommendations discussed in the assessment.

If you do not exclusively own a computer and you are recommended and approved a new DSA funded computer in your Needs Assessment, you will have to pay the first £200 towards it (although some funding authorities have slightly different rules) You should not have to pay for any other DSA support. If you feel that you would not be able to fund this cost, you are advised to contact your Disability Advisor at your university for advice.

If you are a University of Lincoln student, you are advised to contact the Student Support Centre Advice Team for advice about this.

The email address is advice@lincoln.ac.uk or telephone 01522 837495.

Study Your Way with DSA

Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA) Explained

Summary of What Happens After Your Needs Assessment/Meeting

Your Needs Assessor has 10 working days to write up their findings and recommendations in a report and send a copy to you. They will also send a copy to your funding authority (e.g. Student Finance England) for their approval. This is known as a Needs Assessment Report (NAR) You will be given the opportunity of receiving a draft copy of your report before the final copy is sent to your funding authority for approval. Your Needs Assessor will explain this process to you if you want to receive a draft copy. Your NAR will be sent to you by post or password protected email. If you are a University of Lincoln student, a Learning Support Plan (LSP) outlining reasonable adjustments to be considered for you, will be made available to your school's administrators and academics in the University. More information about this can be found at this link:

<https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/student-wellbeing-home/disability/learning-support-plans/>

Study Your Way with DSA

Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA) Explained

Summary of What Happens After Your Needs Assessment/Meeting

If you are an external student, the reasonable adjustments which your university should consider will be within the NAR. You will be asked if you want a copy of your NAR sent to your Disability/Wellbeing Advisor at your university.

A few weeks after your Needs Assessment/meeting, once your funding authority has considered and approved the recommendations in your NAR, you will receive a 'Notification of Entitlement' letter from your funding authority. This is more commonly known as a DSA 2 letter.

This letter is also really important as you will need it to go on to the next stage of the DSA process, so keep it safe in your emails or print a copy. This confirms the equipment and support allowances you are entitled to and paid for through your DSAs, and Allowance, Non-Medical Helper's Allowance (which includes assistive technology training and NMH support) and General Allowance. It will also state the contact details for each supplier. There are instructions and additional information on the letter and, if you need to, pay your contribution for a computer, it tells you what to do. You may have the same supplier for the specialist equipment and assistive technology training, but you may have different suppliers for each, it varies. If you are concerned that you have not received your DSA 2 letter within 6 weeks after your Needs Assessment, you are advised contact your funding authority.

Study Your Way with DSA

Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA) Explained

Summary of What Happens After Your Needs Assessment/Meeting

To arrange your DSA support outlined in the DSA 2 letter, you contact each individual supplier and send them a copy of your DSA 2 letter. They need this as it identifies you by your Customer Reference Number (on the top right hand side of the letter under the date) and it proves that your support has been approved by your funding authority. You are advised to explain to each supplier that you want to arrange your DSA support and they will guide you through the arrangements. If you are paying your contribution for a new DSA funded computer, you pay the supplier at this point. They will not deliver your DSA funded computer until you have paid your contribution to them. Your supplier will advise you about the way you can pay for this.

You can arrange with your suppliers:

- Where and when you can take delivery of your equipment
- Where and when you can have the assistive technology training
- Where and when you can meet with your NMH support worker. Specialist Mentor and Specialist 1:1 Study Skills support is provided as flexibly as possible but there are limitations as to where and when you can meet your support worker so you will need to check this with your provider.

Study Your Way with DSA

Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA) Explained

Summary of What Happens After Your Needs Assessment/Meeting

If you have been approved other allowances such as additional photocopying allowances, small computer consumables allowances or travel allowances, you can claim these expenses by contacting your funding authority (e.g. Student Finance England at this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas/further-information>) You will need to complete the relevant expenses form and supply your receipts.

If you have any technical queries regarding equipment, please contact the equipment supplier in the first instance (the contact details are on your DSA 2 letter, so keep this letter safe) If you need further advice, please contact your Disability/Wellbeing Service.

If you have any queries about your DSA support, either before or after the support has been put in place, you can contact your Assessment Centre.

If you are a University of Lincoln Student and you have queries about your DSA support , you are advised to contact Student Wellbeing and speak to a Wellbeing Advisor through drop in, or email

studentwellbeing@lincoln.ac.uk, or telephone 01522 886400. The Student Services website will also provide additional information about Student Wellbeing: <https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/>

Study Your Way with DSA

Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA) Explained

Useful Links for Additional Information

- [DSAs - Student Finance England](#)
- [DSAs - Student Awards Agency for Scotland](#)
- [DSAs - Student Finance NI](#)
- [DSAs - Student Finance Wales:](#)
- [Disability Rights UK Helpline](#)
- [2019/2020 SFE DSA Long Application Form](#)
- [2019/2020 SFE DSA Short Application Form](#)
- [2019/2020 SFE DSA Guidance Notes](#)
- [Assessment Centres](#)
- [Student Services](#)
- [University of Lincoln Assessment Centre \(ULAC\)](#)
- [DSA-QAG further information](#)
- [DSA -QAG](#)
- [The DSA Team at Student Finance England - dsa_team@slc.co.uk](#)

For additional information about abbreviations and acronyms, links to other funding authorities and eligibility for DSA please see:

[Study Your Way with DSA - Additional Information about Disabled Students' Allowances \(DSA\)](#)