

Date: March 2022

EPISODE 3 – DISABLED STUDENTS’ ALLOWANCE

1. What is Disabled Students’ Allowance (DSA) and how do I know if I am eligible?

DSA is a grant available for students with a disability to support with the extra costs associated with study.

To be eligible for Disabled Students’ Allowance (DSA) you must have a long-term condition or disability that impacts on your ability to study. Many deaf and blind and partially sighted students receive DSA, so we would recommend applying.

DSA is not means tested (i.e., it doesn’t matter how much money you or your family have) and any other benefits will not be affected by DSA. You can get DSA even if you can't get a full student loan or help with fees

2. What support can I expect through DSA?

DSA includes:

- Specialist equipment e.g., a braille embosser, Dictaphone access technology, radio aids, printers and scanners
- Non-Medical Help (NMH) e.g., supporting mobility and orientation around campus, sign language interpreters, electronic notetakers, speech-to-text reporters
- Extra travel costs e.g., taxi fares to and from university
- Other disability-related costs of studying, e.g., photocopying.

It doesn’t include

- Daily support towards personal assistance
- Covering the cost of adapted accommodation needs in university housing or housing provided by an agent to the university. However, universities (and private accommodation providers) are required to make reasonable adjustments so that disabled students are not at a disadvantage compared with others.

3. How can I apply for DSA?

If you are applying for student finance, you can apply online, or you can request a paper application form. The form can take a while to complete, so make sure that you set aside some dedicated time to concentrate. If applying online, you should be able to save your application as you go, allowing you to take a break and return later.

3. Your DSA application (England only)

You should apply directly to Student Finance England (SFE) for DSA. This can be done at the same time you are making your UCAS application.

You will need to supply evidence with your application of your disability. This might be a letter from your doctor, vision impairment specialist or audiologist. SFE, a Disability Officer or University Student Support will be able to advise you on the evidence you need to submit.

You can find further details and download an application form from:

<https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowance-dsa>

For large print, Braille or audio versions of the application form, contact Student Finance England on 0141 243 3686 or email brailleandlargefonts@slc.co.uk.

Your DSA application may vary depending on which country in the UK you live in. See TPT's web page at https://www.pocklington-trust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Your_DSA_application_by_country_in_the_UK_.docx for a more detailed breakdown for these other countries.

4. What happens once you apply

The Student Loans Company (SLC) which is part of SFE, will make a judgement on your eligibility for DSA. You must submit evidence of all your disabilities that you would like support for. They will examine all of the evidence made available and will tell you if you need to submit any additional information. If eligible, you will receive a DS1 letter. This will state which disability or disabilities you will be awarded DSA for. It will ask you to contact an assessment centre and will provide a link to a list of these.

The assessment is an important process, as it will be a chance for you to talk about your disability, how it impacts on your learning and what support you will need.

The assessor will write a report following your assessment meeting. This will set out the support they recommend that you should receive via DSA. You will get to see this report and say whether you are happy with the recommendations.

If you aren't happy with the assessment, you can then discuss further with your assessor. If you are happy, the report will then be sent to the SLC who will then either approve the support, or will ask for further evidence to support the recommendations made in the report.

5. How will my support be put in place?

Once your support package is approved, you will be sent a DSA2 letter. This will outline all your support, and will then include the contact details of the suppliers you must contact to arrange the support and/or the delivery of equipment and training.

6. Is the DSA process about to be reformed and how will this impact on me?

Reforms are planned for England and Wales for how assessments are delivered, and for the delivery of equipment and training.

The reforms should simplify the process and make it easier and more straightforward for the student. Both Thomas Pocklington Trust (TPT) and the National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) are broadly supportive of the reforms and both organisations have been providing advice and guidance to the SLC.

The important thing is not to worry about the reforms and to apply for DSA as soon as possible.

You can read TPT's position on the reforms at: <https://www.pocklington-trust.org.uk/student-support/policy-and-campaigning/policy-position-dsa-reforms/>

7. Where can I find further information?

National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS):

<http://www.ndcs.org.uk/our-services/information-for-deaf-young-people/money/is-there-money-to-help-me-in-education/>

Or contact their Advice and Guidance Helpline:

<https://www.ndcs.org.uk/our-services/services-for-families/helpline/>

or call them on 0808 800 8880.

Thomas Pocklington Trust (TPT)

See the TPT Website: <https://www.pocklington-trust.org.uk/student-support/university/disabled-students-allowances/your-dsa-application/>

or contact TPT's student support service:

<https://www.pocklington-trust.org.uk/student-support/about-our-service/>

or email them at studentsupport@pocklington-trust.org.uk

GOV.UK

For more general information on DSA, see: <https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowance-dsa>

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