



States of Guernsey  
Education Services

## **STUDENT FINANCE**

# **DISABLED STUDENTS' ALLOWANCE**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This guide provides information about Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) offered by the States of Guernsey Education Services Student Finance team for new and continuing students from Guernsey and Alderney in receipt of a higher education award and attending full-time degree courses outside Guernsey.

You are considered disabled if you have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term effect on your ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

### What are DSAs?

DSAs are grants to help pay the extra essential costs you may have as a direct result of your disability, including a long-term health condition, mental-health condition or specific learning difficulty, such as dyslexia or dyspraxia.

DSAs can help with the cost of having a person to support you (such as a note-taker or a sign language interpreter), items of specialist equipment and, in some circumstances, other study-related costs.

The information in this booklet is for guidance only and doesn't cover all circumstances. If you require additional information, please contact the Student Finance team on 706560 or [studentfinance@gov.gg](mailto:studentfinance@gov.gg).

### Do I have to tell my university or college about my disability?

No. You can still get DSAs without telling your university or college but it's helpful if they know so you get all the support you need. Your university Student Welfare Officer or Disability Support Team is a useful place to start enquiring about the support available for you.

In the UK, under the Equality Act 2010, it's unlawful for universities and colleges to discriminate against disabled students by treating them less favourably when offering places and providing services.

Under the Act, universities and colleges must make 'reasonable adjustments' so disabled students aren't significantly disadvantaged compared with other students who aren't disabled.

You should apply for a DSA as soon as you start your course or are aware you need additional support. You can provide us with the initial letter of request and medical evidence prior to the start of your course, although we cannot start the process until you have commenced your course. The sooner you apply, the sooner you'll have everything in place to support you.

## 2. ELIGIBILITY

This section gives some information about who is eligible to get a DSA.

### Do I qualify?

You can get DSAs if you have a disability, including a long-term health condition, mental-health condition or a specific learning difficulty which has a long-term adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities, and you:

- are on an eligible full time undergraduate course (for example, a degree course); or
- are on an eligible postgraduate course (which you need a degree or equivalent qualification to get onto).

Any previous study won't affect your eligibility for DSAs, even if you got financial support. However, if you got DSAs for any specialist equipment for a previous course, this will be taken into account. There's no age limit on getting DSAs.

You can't get DSAs if you're:

- getting support equivalent to DSAs from another funding provider;
- not in receipt of a higher education award for the relevant year from States of Guernsey Education Services Student Finance;
- getting funding from the NHS;
- getting funding from a research council; or
- a sandwich-course student on a full year placement.

You can't get DSAs for more than one course at the same time.

### How do I show I am eligible?

If you're physically disabled, blind, partially sighted, deaf, hard of hearing or have a long-term health condition or mental-health condition, you'll need to provide medical evidence of this, such as a letter from your doctor or specialist.

If you have a specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, you must provide a full diagnostic report, carried out after the age of 16, by a practitioner psychologist or a suitably qualified specialist teacher holding a current Assessment Practising Certificate.

If your diagnostic report was carried out before you were 16, you must get an up-to-date report.

You'll have to pay for any tests you need to prove you're able to get DSAs. If you need a test but can't afford to pay for it, you may be able to get financial help from your university or college.

The information on the next page shows what medical evidence you need to send us.

For physical disabilities, long-term health conditions and mental-health conditions	A medical report or written medical statement from a doctor or qualified specialist confirming your disability, long-term health condition or mental health condition and how this will affect your ability to study
For specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia	A full diagnostic assessment, carried out after you turned 16, from a: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• chartered or practitioner psychologist; or</li> <li>• suitably qualified specialist teacher holding a current Assessment Practising Certificate</li> </ul>

Once we've received your letter of request and medical evidence we may ask you to book a Study Needs Assessment.

A Study Needs Assessment is an informal meeting with an experienced Needs Assessor to discuss what equipment and support we can provide to help you during your time at university or college.

The cost of the Study Needs Assessment is paid through DSAs, up to a limit of £600. We'll only pay for one Study Needs Assessment, but you can be re-assessed at a later date if your needs change significantly.

### 3. NATURE OF AWARDS

#### What help is available?

DSAs can help pay the essential extra costs you may have as a direct result of your disability, including a long-term health condition, mental-health condition or specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia or dyspraxia.

There's a range of help available, which is described in more detail in this section. The amounts given are the maximum payable, although most students will need less. You might also be able to get extra help from your university or college.

We do not provide any equipment for anything we consider that you would require as a part of this course anyway, such as laptops/desktop PCs, printers, scanners, associated warranties and insurances, memory sticks, etc., nor will we pay for any repairs, technical support for such equipment, nor are we able to fund any book, consumable, photocopying or internet allowances.

## Specialist Equipment Allowance

### *What's it for?*

To help you buy any major items of specialist equipment you need because of your disability, including a long-term health condition, mental-health condition or specific learning difficulty.

### *Do I have to pay it back?*

No. However, if we purchase equipment and you then subsequently cease your course, you may need to pay us back or return the equipment.

### *How much can I get?*

You can get up to £4,680 for the whole course. How much you get doesn't depend on your household income, but does depend on your individual needs.

### *Anything else?*

The amount shown is the maximum you can get. It's aimed at supporting those with a high level of need, so most people will get less.

We will order the equipment on your behalf and arrange for the invoice to be sent directly to us. The supplier will liaise with you directly for the delivery of the equipment and the on-site installation and training, so you should ensure that your term-time address and contact details are included within the Study Needs Assessment. As you will require the equipment to assist you to study whilst in the UK, we will arrange for the equipment to be delivered to your UK address only. If there is an exceptional reason why the equipment should be delivered to Guernsey, this will be at your expense.

The invoice for the equipment and training should be sent to us directly by the supplier.

If you need more help or advice, you can speak to the disability advisor at your university or college.

## Non-Medical Helper Allowance

### *What's it for?*

To help pay for support workers (such as readers, sign language interpreters or note-takers) and other non-medical assistance you need to benefit fully from your course.

### *Do I have to pay it back?*

No, unless you leave your course early, in which case you may need to pay back any payments you got after you left.

In some circumstances, you may be required to repay some of the assistance you received if you are required to repeat a year or you transfer to a new course as we do not fund repeat years/course transfers.

#### *How can a non-medical helper help me?*

The type of non-medical help you get will depend on your individual needs, but your support workers should have a good understanding of the support you need and be reliable and trustworthy.

To get the most effective help possible from your support worker, you should let them know if you have any specific requirements, for example if you have a note taker you should let them know what font and text size is best for you.

You should also give them a copy of your timetable and let them know if any class times or rooms change.

#### *How much can I get?*

How much you get doesn't depend on your household income, but does depend on your individual needs. The maximum amount of help available per academic year of the course is £11,840.

#### *Anything else?*

The amount shown above is the maximum available. It's aimed at supporting those with a high level of need, so most people will get less.

Non-medical support will be from the date of our letter confirming DSA support only and will not be backdated. Any costs prior to this or in excess of the allowance awarded are at the student's expense. It is up to the student to book and cancel their appointments.

The money will be paid directly to the supplier of the service (for example, your university or college or a support agency) upon receipt of invoice.

If you need more help or advice, you can speak to the disability advisor at your university or college.

#### General Allowance

##### *What's it for?*

To help pay with other course-related costs you may have as a direct result of your disability. It is awarded in exceptional circumstances only and where the costs cannot be covered by the special equipment or non-medical helper allowances.

*Do I have to pay it back?*

No, unless you leave your course early, in which case you may be asked to pay some of it back.

In some circumstances, you may be required to repay some of the assistance you received if you are required to repeat a year or you transfer to a new course as we do not fund repeat years/course transfers.

*How much can I get?*

How much you get doesn't depend on your income, but does depend on your individual needs. The maximum allowance per academic year is £1,565.

*Anything else?*

The amount shown above is the maximum available.

If you need more help or advice, you can speak to the disability advisor at your university or college.

#### Postgraduate Students

If you have received a DSA as an undergraduate student, and progress to a postgraduate course, you are entitled to receive the same allowances as you did for the undergraduate course. You will, however, be required to write to Student Finance to request that your DSA continues for your postgraduate course.

You will not be required to attend a new Study Needs Assessment if you have already had one when studying at undergraduate level. The amount of DSA you get will depend on your individual needs as detailed in the Study Needs Assessment you had for your undergraduate course.

There is no additional support for postgraduate students.

#### Placement Years

DSA is not usually payable to students on placement years.

## **4. HOW TO APPLY AND HOW IT IS PAID**

You should apply for a DSA as soon as you start your course or are aware you need additional support. You can provide us with the initial letter of request and medical evidence prior to the start of your course, although we cannot start the process until you have commenced your course. The sooner you apply, the sooner you'll have everything in place to support you.



What to do and when to do it in three easy steps!

### *Step 1*

Once you've applied for your main student finance, or as soon as you become aware you require additional support, write to us requesting consideration for a DSA, including the medical evidence as detailed on pages 4/5.

We cannot start the process before you've commenced your course, but if we have these documents ready, as soon as the academic year starts, we can begin the process.

### *Step 2*

Once you've applied for DSA and the academic year has commenced, if we agree that you are eligible, we will write to you advising that you may progress to the next stage and book an appointment at your nearest ACCESS or NNAC Centre to undertake a Study Needs Assessment to find out exactly what equipment and support you require. We will meet the cost of this Study Needs Assessment to a value of £600.

A Study Needs Assessment helps us work out how we can support your needs during your time at university or college. It's not a test – it's your chance to have an informal chat with a specialist advisor about your disability and the impact it has on your studies.

During your Study Needs Assessment your assessor will work out what you need to help you get the most from your time at university or college.

If we ask you to do this, you must book this assessment as soon as possible. If we have agreed to provide you with a DSA and you do not follow through the procedure but then claim to have failed a year due to the issues for which the DSA is required, you will be required to fund the repeat year yourself.

A copy of the Study Needs Assessment should be forwarded to us as soon as possible so that we can consider its recommendations promptly.

### *Step 3*

We'll write to you, and the assessor, to confirm what specialist equipment and other support DSAs can pay for.

We'll also give instructions for ordering any specialist equipment or arranging other support.

If your course or your needs change, you should contact us as soon as possible.

## **5. FURTHER INFORMATION AND CONTACTS**

For more information and everything you need to know about student finance, visit [www.gov.gg/studentfinance](http://www.gov.gg/studentfinance)

You can also phone us on (01481) 706560 between 08:30 and 17:00 Monday to Friday or email us on [studentfinance@gov.gg](mailto:studentfinance@gov.gg).

*Disabled Students' Allowances Quality Assurance Group*

Details of your nearest needs assessment centre are given on the DSA-QAG website at [www.dsa-qag.org.uk](http://www.dsa-qag.org.uk)

*Disability Rights UK*

Disability Rights UK runs a free helpline providing information and advice to disabled students as well as publishing 'Into Higher Education' an annual guide for disabled students thinking about entering higher education.

Visit the Disability Rights UK website at [www.disabilityrightsuk.org.uk](http://www.disabilityrightsuk.org.uk)

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