



2019/20

Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs)



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What is Student Finance Wales?

Student Finance Wales is a service provided by the Student Loans Company. We provide financial support on behalf of the Welsh Government to students from Wales entering higher education in the UK.

This guide will help if you're applying for extra support because you have a disability, including a long-term health condition, mental-health condition, Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or specific learning difficulty, such as dyslexia.

For more tools and guidance or to apply, visit www.studentfinancewales.co.uk

You'll also find regular updates on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube:

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What's this guide about?

This guide provides information about Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) for new and continuing students in higher education.

You're considered disabled under the Equality Act 2010 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.

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, Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or specific learning difficulty, such as dyslexia. You don't usually have to pay these back.

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

The information in this booklet is for guidance only and doesn't cover all circumstances.

If you don't usually live in Wales, you can find out more information about what's available where you live from the following websites:

England: www.gov.uk/studentfinance

Northern Ireland: www.studentfinancenir.co.uk

Scotland: www.saas.gov.uk

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. If you don't want to tell your university or college, you should include a letter stating this along with your application.

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.



Do I qualify?

You can get DSAs if you have a disability, including a long-term health condition, mental-health condition, Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or a specific learning difficulty which affects your ability to study, and you're:


- on an eligible full-time or part-time undergraduate course (for example, a degree, or HND-level course) including Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and distance learning courses, or
- on an eligible full-time or part-time postgraduate course, including ITE and distance learning courses.

Any previous study won't affect your eligibility for DSAs, even if you got student finance. 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
- an EU student
- getting a bursary from the NHS
- getting funding from a research council
- getting funding from Research Councils UK
- a sandwich-course student on a placement for 10 weeks or more



You may still be able to get DSAs if you're doing certain types of unpaid work experience in the public sector or voluntary sector. If you don't qualify for DSAs during your placement year, you may be able to get help from the Access to Work scheme.

Visit www.businesswales.gov.wales/skillsgateway/access-work for more information.

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

Part-time and Open University (OU) students

To get DSAs, you must be registered for a part-time (including those provided by the OU) or OU undergraduate or postgraduate course that lasts at least one year and doesn't take more than four times as long to complete as an equivalent full-time course.

Further information on what you can get and how to apply is available at www.studentfinancewales.co.uk

Do I qualify?

How do I show I'm eligible?

The following table shows what medical evidence you need to send us when you apply. Remember to keep a copy of anything you send us for yourself.

For physical or sensory disabilities, long-term health conditions and mental-health conditions	A Disability Evidence Form or a photocopy of a written statement or letter from a doctor or other qualified medical professional. This letter should confirm the long-term effects that your disability has on you being able to carry out day-to-day activities, including education.
For specific learning difficulties	A photocopied full diagnostic report, produced from: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a practitioner psychologist, or• a specialist teacher holding a current Assessment Practising Certificate.
For Autism spectrum disorders	A photocopy of one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) from a local authority,• an Educational Health Care Plan, or• a written statement or letter from a doctor or qualified medical professional which confirms the long term effects your disorder has on your ability to carry out day to day activities, including education.

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.

What can I get?

DSAs help pay the extra costs you may have as a direct result of your disability, including a long-term health condition, mental-health condition, Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or specific learning difficulty.

There's a range of help available, which this section describes in more detail. The amounts given are the maximum you can get.

What you can get doesn't depend on your household income but does depend on your needs assessment.



Undergraduate students

Specialist Equipment Allowance

► What's it for?

To help you buy any specialist equipment you need because of your disability, long-term health condition, mental-health condition, Autism spectrum disorder or specific learning difficulty. You can also use it to pay for repairs, insurance or extended warranty costs for that equipment.

► How much can I get?

You can get up to £5,657 for the whole course.

How much you can get doesn't depend on your household income, but does depend on your individual needs.

► How's it paid?

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

► Do I have to pay it back?

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

► Anything else?

The amount shown above is the maximum you can get.

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?

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

► How much can I get?

If you're studying full-time, you can get up to £22,472 a year.

If you're studying part-time, you can get up to £16,853 a year.

How much you can get doesn't depend on your household income, but does depend on your individual needs.

► How's it paid?

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

► Do I have to pay it back?

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

► Anything else?

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?

It helps to pay other disability-related costs.

You can use it to buy items such as printer cartridges and Braille paper, or to top up the specialist equipment and non-medical helper allowances if necessary. It will also be used to pay for your Study Needs Assessment and any travel expenses for attending.

► How much can I get?

If you're studying full time, you can get up to £1,894 a year.

If you're studying part time, you can get up to £1,338 a year.

How much you can get doesn't depend on your household income, but does depend on your individual needs.

► How's it paid?

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

► Do I have to pay it back?

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

► Anything else?

The amount shown above is the maximum you can get.

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

Travel Allowance

► What's it for?

It helps with any extra travel costs you may have to pay to get to your university or college because of your disability (for example, if you need to take a taxi because your disability prevents you from taking public transport). You won't be eligible for help with everyday travel costs which any student would expect to pay. You may also have to provide receipts.

► How much can I get?

You can get reasonable spending on extra travel costs.

How much you can get doesn't depend on your household income, but does depend on your individual needs.

► How's it paid?

The money will be paid directly to the supplier of the services (for example, a taxi firm) or into your bank account. If you're claiming using a 'reimbursement of costs form', available from www.studentfinancewales.co.uk, remember to keep any receipts or invoices as evidence.

► Do I have to pay it back?

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

► Anything else?

If you're asked to attend a Study Needs Assessment, the General Allowance can be used to pay for the assessment and any travel expenses for attending.

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

What can I get?

What's a Study Needs Assessment?

A Study Needs Assessment helps us learn how we can support your needs during your time at university or college.

Once we've received your application form and medical evidence we'll ask you to book a Study Needs Assessment.

You shouldn't book your Study Needs Assessment until we tell you that you're eligible.

It's not a test – but simply 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 advisor will evaluate what kind of support you require to assist you during your studies.

recommending any specialist equipment or additional support that could help with your studies.

We'll only pay for one Study Needs Assessment unless your course or needs change significantly. If you're unhappy with your initial Study Needs Assessment, you should contact us by emailing **SFW_DSA_Team@slc.co.uk**

Full-time and part-time postgraduate students

You can get a single allowance of up to £20,000 a year, if you're studying full time. This will be less if you're studying part time. You can use this for specialist equipment, non-medical helpers, extra travel costs or other course-related costs. The amount of DSAs you get will depend on your Study Needs Assessment.

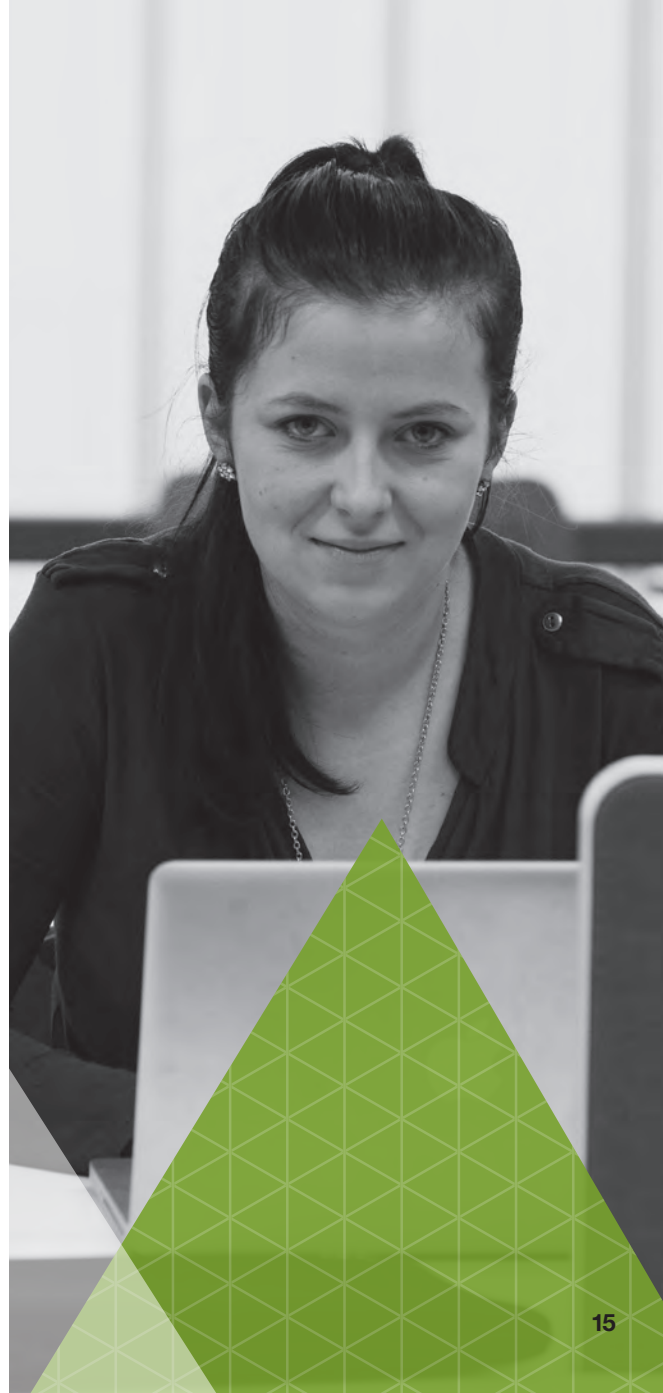
Usually, postgraduate students won't need to attend a new Study Needs Assessment if you already had one when studying at

Students on Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) courses can apply for the DSAs awarded to undergraduates so won't be eligible for postgraduate DSAs.

Benefits

Most full-time students can't get income-related benefits such as Universal Credit, income-based Employment and Support Allowance or Housing Benefit. However, certain groups (including single parents, student couples with dependent children and some disabled students) may be able to get income-related benefits while they're studying. Jobcentre Plus and your local authority's Housing Benefit section will take account of any Maintenance Loan (and some student grants) you can get. DSAs won't be taken into account.

For more information visit
www.gov.uk



How and when do I apply?

Undergraduate students

Step 1

New full-time students

To apply, visit www.studentfinancewales.co.uk

New part-time students

You can apply for DSAs by completing a full DSA1 application form, which you can download from www.studentfinancewales.co.uk

Step 2

Once you've applied for DSAs, we'll ask you to arrange a Study Needs Assessment to find out exactly what equipment and support you need. When we ask you to do this, you should book this assessment as soon as possible. To find your nearest Study Needs Assessment centre, go to www.dsa-qag.org.uk

Step 3

Once we get the results of your Study Needs Assessment, we'll let you know if DSAs can pay for any specialist equipment and other support recommended in your Study Needs Assessment report. We'll also give you instructions for ordering equipment or arranging other support.

We don't usually require students to reapply for DSAs every year. When you're applying for student finance, you should tick the box to say that you want to apply for DSAs for every year of your course.

Postgraduate students, part-time students and students only applying for DSAs will need to complete a full DSA1 form each year. However, you won't need to resubmit your evidence unless your needs have changed.

You can apply for Disabled Students' Allowance in English or Welsh.

Postgraduate students

If you're a postgraduate student and want to apply for DSAs, you should fill in the full DSA1 application form and send it to us. You can download the form at **www.studentfinancewales.co.uk**

How and when do I apply?

NHS students

If you're getting funding from the NHS, you can visit the website at www.nwssp.wales.nhs.uk/student-awards

If you're getting an undergraduate social work bursary, you should apply to us.

NHS secondees

If you're employed by the NHS and are seconded (transferred temporarily) onto a healthcare course, you're not usually eligible for bursaries or DSAs from the NHS. However, you can get DSAs from us if you meet the eligibility conditions.

Research Councils

If you're getting funding from research councils, you can visit the website at www.rcuk.ac.uk/skills/training for more information on how to apply for DSAs.



Information and contacts

Student Finance Wales

For more information or to apply, visit www.studentfinancewales.co.uk

You can also phone us on **0300 200 4050** (textphone: **0300 100 1693**) between 8am and 6pm Monday to Friday.

Disabled Students' Allowances Quality Assurance Group (DSA-QAG)

You can find details of your nearest Study Needs Assessment centre on the DSA-QAG website at 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

Phone: **0330 995 0414** (11am to 1pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays.)

Email: students@disabilityrightsuk.org

National Union of Students (NUS)

You can get more information from the NUS website at www.nus.org.uk/nus-wales

Information and contacts

National Association of Student Money Advisers (NASMA)

NASMA is a charity working to help students by providing advice, information and training. You can get more information by visiting www.nasma.org.uk

Equality Advisory & Support Service (EASS)

The EASS helpline can give information and guidance on equality, discrimination and human rights issues.

Phone: **0808 800 0082**

Textphone: **0808 800 0084**

Lines are open from 9am to 7pm on Monday to Friday and from 10am to 2pm on Saturdays.

Visit the EASS website at www.equalityadvisoryservice.com

You can download more copies of this guide online at www.studentfinancewales.co.uk. You can also order forms and guides in Braille, large print or audio by emailing your details along with which form and format you require to brailleandlargefonts@slc.co.uk or you can telephone us on **0141 243 3686**. Please note, the above email address and telephone number can only deal with requests for alternative formats of forms and guides.

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