University of
Southampton

DISABLED STUDENTS' ALLOWANCE (DSA)

A GUIDE TO WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW AND HOW DSA CAN HELP

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) is a non-repayable government grant to help cover any study costs you may have as a direct result of a disability.

You may be eligible to apply for funding through the DSA if you have a disability, long-term health condition, mental health condition or specific learning difference.

It is available on its own or alongside other student finance loans, but you will need to provide supporting information:

For a disability, mental health or long-term health condition – a report of letter from your doctor, consultant or other medical professional.

If you do not have suitable medical evidence, you can ask your GP/medical professional to complete a DSA disability (or medical) evidence form that is available from your Funding Body's DSA website.

For a specific learning difference such as dyslexia – a copy of pre- or post-16 full diagnostic assessment report from a practitioner psychologist registered with the Health and Care Professional Council or a suitably qualified specialist teacher with a current Assessing Practising Certificate.

HOW DSA CAN HELP
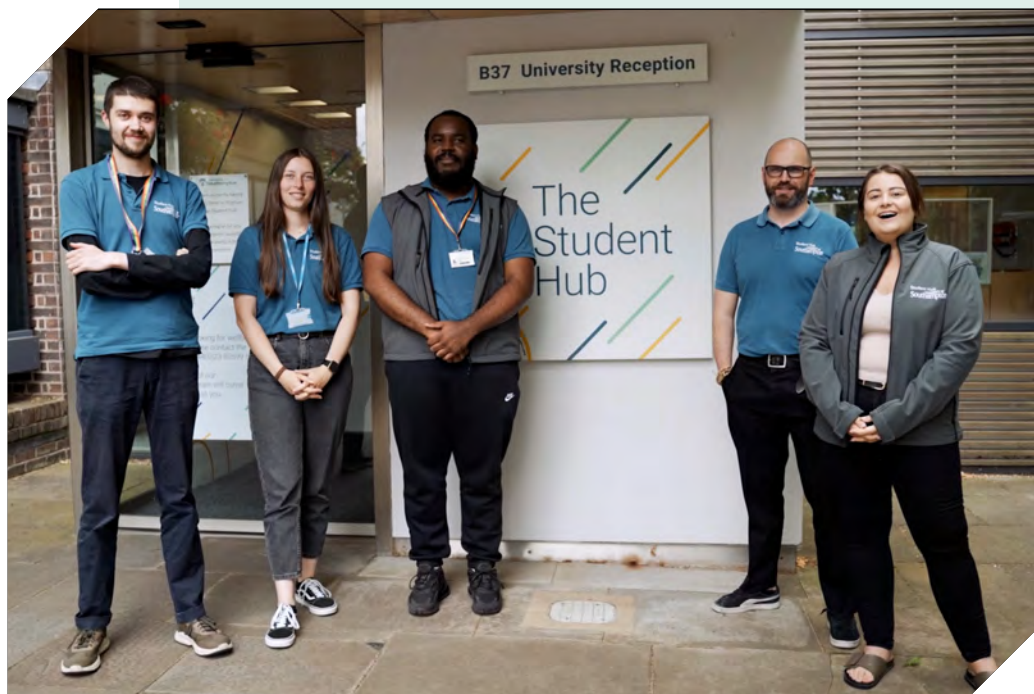
What DSA can pay for

DSA can help with the cost of:

+ Specialist 1:1 (non-medical) help, such as mentoring, study skills, specialist note-taking, and professional support for students with sensory impairments
+ Specialist equipment, such as assistive technology, software, and ergonomic equipment
+ General costs, such as printing and travel

The support you are awarded is based on your needs and the recommendations made by an appointed assessor.

Do not purchase any equipment until you've received confirmation of your entitlement – you will not be reimbursed.

How DSA is paid

Most payments will be made directly to the suppliers providing your awarded support. Only some allowance costs can be paid to you – the DSA will inform you if this applies.

A STEP BY STEP OVERVIEW

A step-by-step overview of the process to support and guide you in your DSA application.

The process from applying for DSA to getting support in place can take around 14 weeks.

It is best to apply as early as possible to get the maximum benefit. You can apply before starting university or during your course.

Key steps to applying for DSA:

Step 1 – Apply for DSA as early as possible

Step 2 – Assessment: you may be invited to attend an assessment to identify the support you need once your application has been processed (the DSA team will let you know by email if this applies to you)

Step 3 – Receive support: once your support has been approved you can set up and arrange the delivery of your awarded support

Track your progress with our DSA Checklist at the back of this booklet.

HOW WE CAN SUPPORT YOU

The university does not award DSA, but we can assist you in applying or accessing the support you are entitled to. We run regular DSA support drop-ins and bookable 1:1 sessions throughout the year for students who are studying with us.

Separate to the DSA, we offer a wide range of support for all sorts of requirements including:

+ Physical disabilities and long-term health conditions
+ Mental health conditions
+ Specific learning differences including dyslexia and dyspraxia
+ Neurodivergence including autism and ADHD

Connect with the Student Hub
www.southampton.ac.uk/studentservices
023 8059 9599
studenthub@soton.ac.uk

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO NEXT

Here's a checklist of what you need to do:

- ☐ Obtain supporting information of your disability, health condition, or specific learning difference – keep more than one copy as you may need it for something else
- ☐ Complete and submit a DSA application – make sure you attach your evidence
- ☐ Receive your eligibility letter (DSA1) by email
- ☐ If eligible, book and attend a needs assessment
- ☐ Receive a copy of your Needs Assessment Report (NAR)
- ☐ Receive your notification of entitlement letter (DSA2) by email
- ☐ Contact suppliers and providers of any DSA-approved support using your DSA2 letter

Check the government website for the most up-to-date information
www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowance-dsa