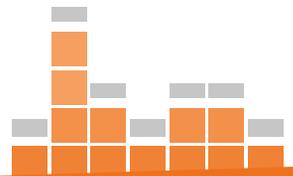


sound advice on

STUDENT FINANCE



Extra help – Disabled Students' Allowances 2017/18

www.studentfinancewales.co.uk



cyllid myfyrwyr cymru
student finance wales



Ariennir gan
Lywodraeth Cymru
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Welsh Government

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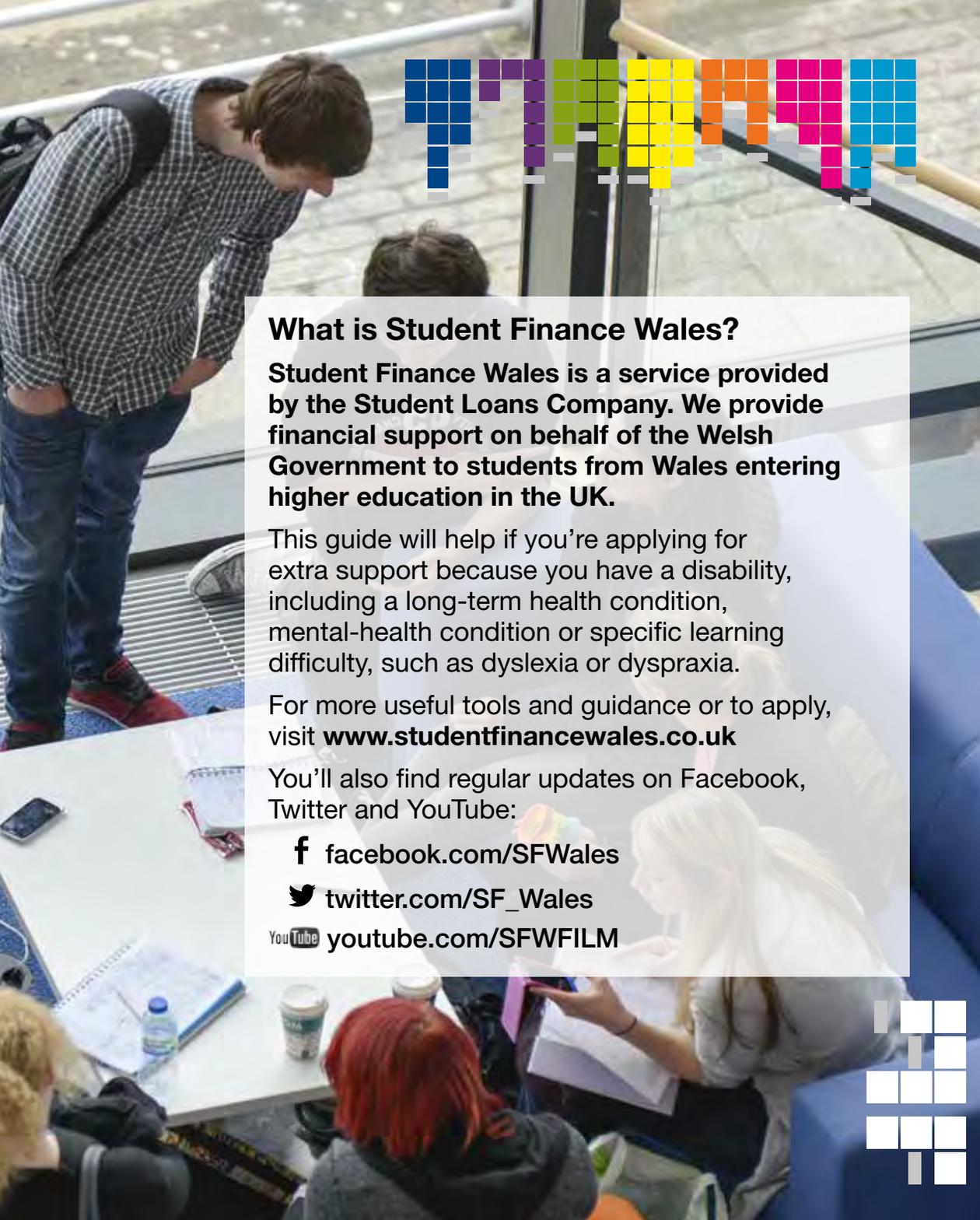
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student finance wales



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 or specific learning difficulty, such as dyslexia or dyspraxia.

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

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

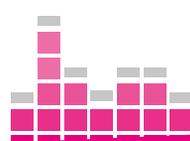
f facebook.com/SFWales

t twitter.com/SF_Wales

YouTube youtube.com/SFWFILM



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 or specific learning difficulty, such as dyslexia or dyspraxia. You don't 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), items of 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

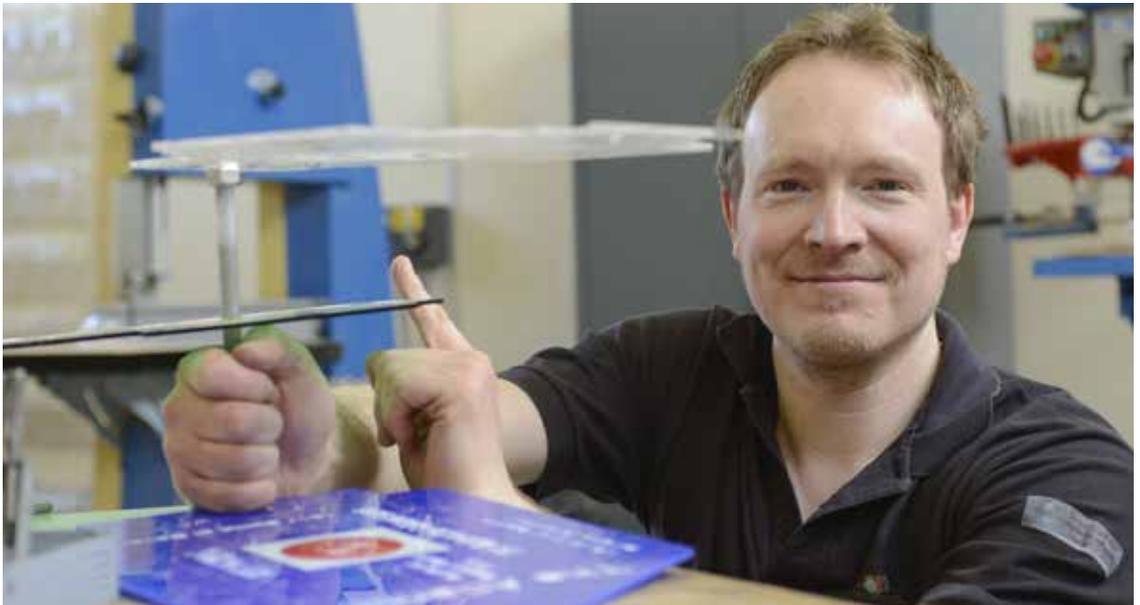
Do I have to tell my university or college about my disability, including a long-term health condition, mental-health condition or specific learning difficulty?

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.

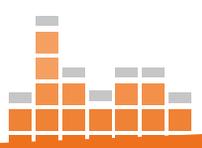
If you don't want to tell your university or college you should include a letter stating this along with your Disabled Students' Allowances application.

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?



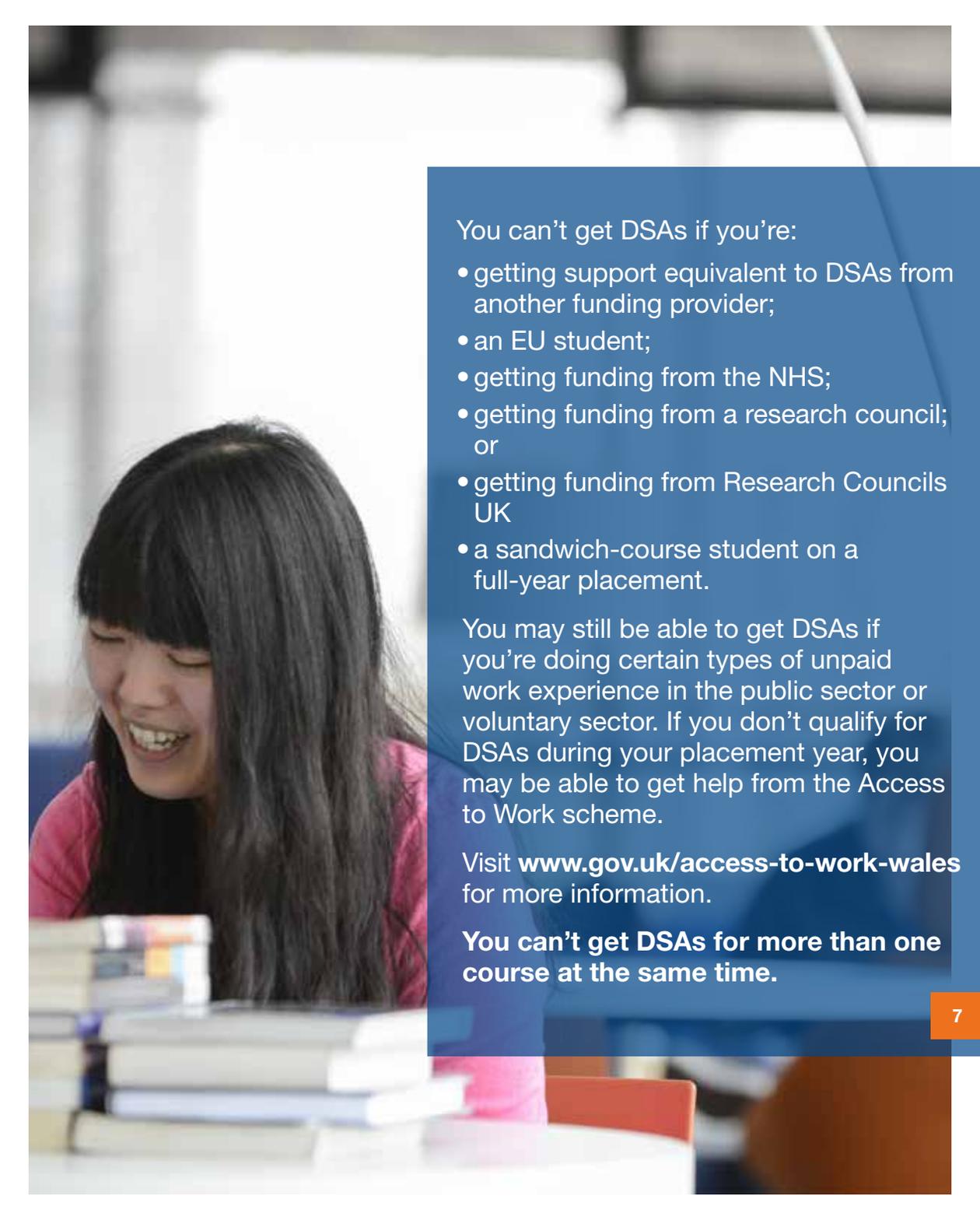
You can get DSAs if you have a disability, including a long-term health condition, mental-health condition or a specific learning difficulty which affects your ability to study, and you're:

- on an eligible full-time or part-time undergraduate course (for example, a degree or HND-level course) including distance-learning courses; or
- on an eligible full-time or part-time postgraduate course (which you need a degree or equivalent qualification to get onto), including distance learning courses.

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.





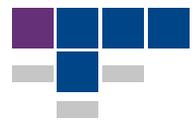
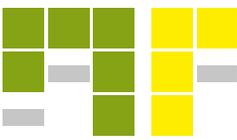
You can't get DSAs if you're:

- getting support equivalent to DSAs from another funding provider;
- an EU student;
- getting funding from the NHS;
- getting funding from a research council; or
- getting funding from Research Councils UK
- a sandwich-course student on a full-year placement.

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.gov.uk/access-to-work-wales 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 be eligible for DSAs, you must be registered for a part-time or OU undergraduate or postgraduate course that lasts for 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

How do I show I'm 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 suitably qualified specialist teacher holding a current Assessment Practising Certificate.

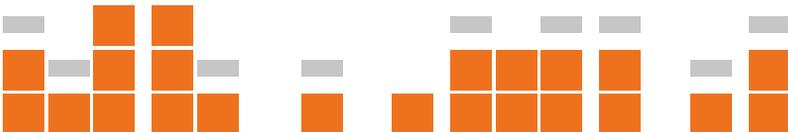
If your diagnostic report was carried out before you were 16, you must get an up-to-date report.



The table below shows what medical evidence you need to send us.

For physical disabilities	A report or letter from your GP or appropriate specialist.
For specific learning difficulties	A full diagnostic report, produced since you turned 16, from: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a chartered or practitioner psychologist or• a specialist teacher holding a current Assessment Practising Certificate.
For long-term health conditions and mental-health conditions	A letter from your GP or Mental Health Proforma, completed and signed by a doctor or other qualified specialist.

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.





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 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.

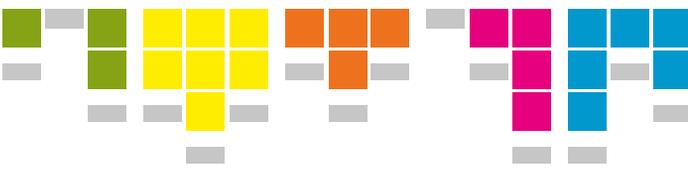
See page 15 for more details.



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 or specific learning difficulty. You can also use it to pay for repairs, insurance or extended warranty costs arising from owning that equipment.
How much can I get?	You can get up to £5,332 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 equipment supplier.
Do I have to pay it back?	No. However, if you purchase equipment before starting your course and then fail to attend, you'll need to pay for or return the equipment.
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.

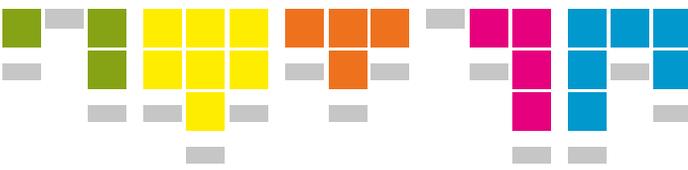


Non-medical Helper Allowance

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?	<p>If you're studying full time, you can get up to £21,181 a year.</p> <p>If you're studying part time, you can get up to £15,885 a year.</p> <p>How much you can get doesn't depend on your household income, but does depend on your individual needs.</p>
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?	<p>The amounts shown above are the maximum you can get.</p> <p>If you need more help or advice, you can speak to the disability advisor at your university or college.</p>

General Allowance

What's it for?	It helps to pay other disability-related costs. You can buy items such as printer cartridges and Braille paper, or to top up the specialist equipment and non-medical helper allowances if necessary.
How much can I get?	<p>If you're studying full-time, you can get up to £1,785 a year.</p> <p>If you're studying part time, you can get up to £1,338 a year.</p> <p>How much you can get doesn't depend on your household income, but does depend on your individual needs.</p>
How's it paid?	It will be paid directly to the supplier of the services or into your bank account once you've provided a receipt.
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?	<p>The amounts shown above are the maximum you can get.</p> <p>If you are asked to attend a Study Needs Assessment, the General Allowance can be used to pay for the assessment and any travel expenses for attending.</p> <p>If you need more help or advice, you can speak to the disability advisor at your university or college.</p>



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

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 may ask you to book a Study Needs Assessment.

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.

This helps to produce a report 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

You can apply for DSAs as soon as the application service opens. The sooner you apply, the more likely it is you'll have everything you need ready for the start of your course.



Full-time and part-time postgraduate students

You can get a single allowance of up to £10,590 a year. 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 they have already had one when studying at undergraduate level.

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

Initial Teacher Training courses (ITT)

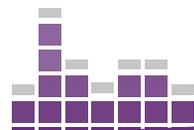
If you're already on an ITT course, you can continue to apply for the same package of DSAs you've had in previous years.

Students who started a full-time ITT course on or after 1 September 2010 can apply for the full-time support package, including the full-time DSAs package.

Students who started a part-time ITT course on or after 1 September 2010 can apply for the standard part-time student support package, including part-time 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. Special Support Grant and DSAs won't be taken into account. For more information visit, **www.gov.uk**.



Undergraduate students

STEP 1

New full-time students

Once you've applied for your main student finance and told us you want to apply for DSAs, we'll send you an application form.

If you only want to apply for DSAs and no other types of student finance, you need to complete a DSAs application form that you can download from **www.studentfinancewales.co.uk**

New part-time students

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

STEP 2

Once you've applied for DSAs, we may ask you to arrange a Study Needs Assessment to find out exactly what equipment and support you need.

If 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

We'll 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.

STEP 4

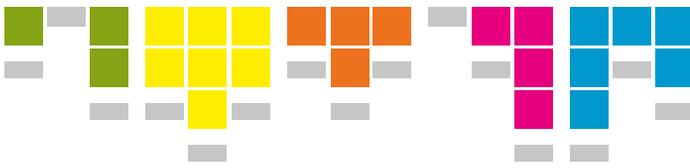
Once we get the results of your Study Needs Assessment, we'll let you know if Disabled Students' Allowances can pay for any specialist equipment and other support recommended in your Study Needs Assessment report. We'll also give you instructions for ordering equipment or arranging other support.

We don't usually require students to re-apply for DSAs every year. When the student is applying for student finance, they should tick the box to say that they want to apply for DSAs in subsequent years of their course.

If any of their circumstances change, such as their course details or their university or college, they should let us know.

Postgraduate students, part-time students and students only applying for DSAs will need to complete an application (DSA1 full form) each year – but won't need to resubmit their evidence unless their needs change.





Postgraduate students

If you're a postgraduate student and you want to apply for DSAs, you should fill in the DSAs application form (DSA1) and send it to us.

You can download the form at www.studentfinancewales.co.uk

NHS students

If you're getting funding from NHS, you can visit the website at www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/955/page/72050

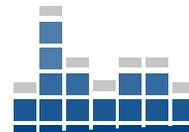
If you're getting an undergraduate social work bursary, you should apply to us.

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.



Student Finance Wales

For more useful tools and guidance 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)

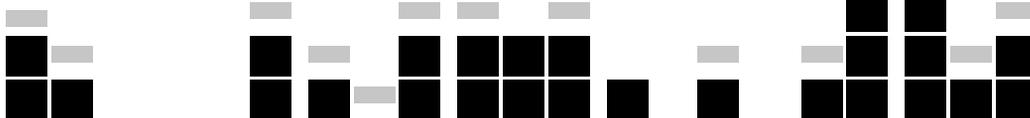
Details of your nearest Study Needs Assessment centre are given on the DSA-QAG website at www.dsa-qag.org.uk

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.uk

Phone: **0800 328 5050** (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

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.

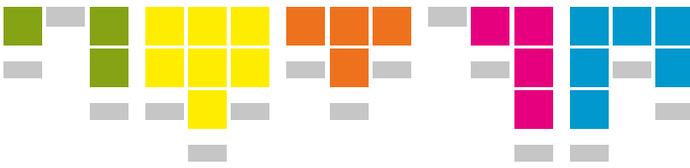
Phone: **0808 800 0082**

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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