

Disabled Students' Allowance (Higher Education) Full time and Part time HE students from 2024-25

Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) is support to cover the study-related costs you have because of a mental health problem including social anxiety, long term illness or any other disability. You do not have to pay back any funding allocated to you from the DSA.

The type of support and how much you get depends on your individual needs - not your household income.

You can apply for DSA if you have a condition that affects your ability to study. For example:

- specific learning difficulty, eg dyslexia or ADHD
- mental health condition, eg anxiety (including social anxiety) or depression
- physical disability, eg if you have to use crutches, a wheelchair or a special keyboard
- sensory disability, eg if you're visually impaired, deaf or have a hearing impairment
- long-term health condition, eg cancer, chronic heart disease or HIV

You should apply submitting an online application to Student Finance England via your Student Loan Account, which is created when you apply for a Tuition Fee Loan. You do not have to have a Tuition Fee loan in order to apply for DSA. <https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowance-dsa/how-to-claim> It often takes approximately 14 weeks for your application to be processed, assessed and completed so please do not delay your application.

There is a single flat rate of £26,948 available for full and part time, new and continuing students who are assessed as eligible for the DSA. Eligible students will be able to use the allowance for:

- Specialist equipment (students are required to pay £200 towards the cost of a laptop)
- Non-medical helpers, e.g. 1:1 study skills tutor or specialist mentor
- Extra travel costs you have to pay because of your disability
- Other general expenditure incurred as a result of a disability

Proving you are eligible: You will need to proof of your eligibility as per the guidance below

Condition	Proof
Disabilities or long-term health condition	A copy of a report or letter from your doctor or consultant - you can also fill in the disability evidence form (PDF, 65KB)
Mental health condition	A copy of a report or letter from your doctor or consultant - you can also fill in the disability evidence form (PDF, 65KB)
Specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia	A copy of a 'diagnostic assessment' from a practitioner psychologist or suitably qualified specialist teacher

Steps you need to take to claim your Disabled Student's Allowance:

1. Establish whether you are eligible by talking to the Head of Student Services or Senior HE Administrator at Strode College.
2. Evidence of your disability. You can ask your GP to complete the disability evidence form overleaf (available via the link overleaf). Alternatively, if you have recently studied at Strode College, the Student Services Team can give you a copy of any existing documentation. If you do not have a diagnostic assessment but suspect that you may have a learning support need such as dyslexia/dyspraxia, the college is able to arrange a formal assessment for a cost to the student of circa £450 for an assessment which includes an £80 deposit. Students will be asked to complete a visual questionnaire which is forwarded onto the assessor. The Assessor may require the student to have a colorimetry test with a specialise optician before the assessor undertakes the assessment.
3. Submit your application and supporting medical/disability diagnosis to Student Finance England as soon as possible
<https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowance-dsa/how-to-claim>
4. The DSA will contact you directly to let you know whether your application has been accepted. If it has you will be assigned one of two companies **Study Tech** or **Capita** who will be your end to end support for your DSA. This includes your Study Needs Assessment. Once you have received your DSA letter confirming the support you have been awarded, Study Tech or Capita will be responsible for the installation, set up and familiarisation of equipment and training and providing the non-medical helper/specialist mentor if awarded.
5. Although you are not obliged to do so, we encourage you to share your Study Needs Assessment with your Programme Manager as this will help the team to understand your learning difference requirements and make reasonable adjustments.
NB If you are studying FdSc Psychology or FdA Contemporary Business, your Study Needs Assessment will be helpful to determine if you are eligible for Exam/In-Class Test concessions such as 25% extra time etc, which cannot be awarded without appropriate documentation.

To avoid any delay in the provision of support we encourage you to apply for DSA as soon as possible e.g. from March before your course starts. However, if you start your course and think you have a learning difference support need but have not yet applied for DSA then please tell your Programme Manager who will signpost you accordingly.

If you have any questions, please email Senior HE Administrator wca vill@strode-college.ac.uk in the first instance.