

**Student Awards Agency
for Scotland**



Notes to help students apply for the
Disabled Students' Allowance
Session 2009-2010

If you would like an alternative version of our DSA literature in a format most suited to your needs, please contact us on 0845 111 1711.

Student Awards Agency for Scotland
Gyleview House
3 Redheughs Rigg
Edinburgh
EH12 9HH

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1 Introduction

These notes give advice about the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) for students studying on one of the following courses of Higher Education:

- HNC
- HND
- Degree or equivalent level course
- Foundation year or a degree course if the student has enrolled for the whole course not just the foundation year, and the foundation year is a necessary and compulsory part of the course
- Diploma in Nursing and Midwifery
- Honours degree in Nursing or Midwifery
- Full-time Postgraduate students who are not receiving DSA support from another source
- Part-time Postgraduate course which is at least 50% of a full time course and the student is not receiving DSA support from another source
- Part-time undergraduate course at HNC level or above which is at least 50% of a full time course
- Distance learning students provided they are undertaking at least 50% of a full time course
- Open University students who are studying at least 60 credits in a year

The following students **are not entitled** to claim DSA support:

- EU students receiving a fees only award
- Part time students undertaking less than 50% of a full time course
- Open University students studying less than 60 credits
- Students undertaking a course below HNC level
- Students who are receiving funding from their Local Education Authority
- Postgraduate students receiving funding from a Research Council or the Social Work Department
- Students on Access courses

You should use these notes to help you fill in your application for the DSA. If you need more information about the DSA you can:

- Visit our website at www.saas.gov.uk; or
 - Email us at SAAS_4@scotland.gsi.gov.uk; or
 - Call us on 0845 111 0244
- Write to us at: The Student Awards Agency for Scotland
Gyleview House
3 Redheughs Rigg
Edinburgh
EH12 9HH

If you need help to fill in your application or you are not sure what you can apply for, you can also contact the Disability Advisor at your college, university or distance-learner provider.

The advice in this leaflet is not a full statement of Students' Allowances (Scotland) Regulations 2007 (as amended) or the Nursing and Midwifery Student Allowances (Scotland) Regulations 2007. If you need more information about student support for Higher Education courses please contact us.

2 The Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)

2.1 What the DSA will not pay for

You can apply for the DSA if you have a disability or learning difficulty and as a result of which have extra costs that are directly related to your course. The amount of DSA we can give you does not depend on you or your family's income.

We cannot help you with costs that occur as a result of your disability that you would normally have to pay if you were not studying. In addition, DSA **will not** cover the costs of the following:

- Support, counselling or tutorial services that your institution makes available to all students
- Extra tuition or support in your subject
- Services that your institution could reasonably provide as part of their responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and other legislation
- Services that another agency (for example the Jobcentre Plus or Social Work Services) could reasonably provide for you
- The cost of establishing whether or not you have a disability or specific learning difficulty

2.2 How to apply for the DSA

The following 4 documents may be needed if you are applying for DSA:

- A. The main student support application form (SAS3 or SAS7);
- B. A DSA application form;
- C. An additional learning needs assessment report;
- D. Evidence or diagnosis of your disability or learning difficulty.

A Main student support application form (SAS3 or SAS7)

You will only need this if you are also applying to SAAS for other forms of support, for example tuition fees or a student loan.

If this applies to you we cannot process your DSA application unless we have a SAS3 or SAS7 from you.

B DSA application form

We need a DSA application form from you each year.

Before you fill in the application form, make sure you have the correct one. There are two types, as follows:

- Full-time students applying to us for their fees and living costs should fill in form DSA F/T.
- Part-time, distance-learning or full-time students not applying to us for their fees and/or living-costs support should fill in form DSA O.

C Additional learning needs assessment report

We only ask for a needs assessment report with your first application for DSA, unless you are returning to Higher Education after a break in study, or your disability or learning difficulty has changed.

A needs assessment is necessary to help you identify specific help and/or equipment to support you throughout your programme of study.

Needs assessments are carried out by skilled staff in some universities and colleges as well as at the regional Scottish Access Centres. If your chosen university or college is not authorised to carry out the needs assessment we will refer you to one of the Scottish Access Centres. You can find out if your institution is currently authorised by visiting the 'support information' section of our website. Alternatively, you can contact the Disability Advisor at your institution.

If you intend applying for DSA then it is important you complete your application as early as possible. This is particularly relevant if you are applying for DSA for the first time and would like a needs assessment report.

SAAS will cover the cost of the needs assessment.

D Diagnosis/Medical Evidence

In the first year you apply for DSA, you must send a copy of supporting documents to confirm your disability or learning difficulty.

For dyslexia or specific learning difficulties a statement or report from one of the following:

- An Educational Psychologist
- Educational professionals who hold a Professional Association of Teachers of Students with Specific Learning Difficulties (PATOSS) or equivalent qualification
- Confirmation from a previous educational establishment such as a school or college confirming that a diagnosis has been made by a relevant professional.

For other medical conditions evidence in the form of a diagnosis from a qualified professional including:

- GP (General Practitioner)
- Nurse
- Occupational therapist
- Physiotherapist
- Audiologist
- Psychiatric Nurse

Other forms of evidence:

- We can also accept evidence of receipt of support or benefits that have been provided by another agency such as the Department of Work and Pensions, providing they required the student to undertake a diagnosis of their disability.

However, this is not a complete list. If you have evidence from a professional that we have not listed above you should contact us to check if we can accept it before you send your form to us.

Please note that if we send you for a needs assessment your assessor may ask you to supply additional evidence before they can carry out your assessment. They will discuss this with you when they arrange their assessment.

Although SAAS cannot pay for the cost of any diagnosis your institution should be able to offer you help from their Discretionary Funds. You should contact your institution for further advice if you have to pay for evidence of your disability.

2.3 Important notes about the DSA application form

- You should read these notes carefully. If you need advice about applying you should contact us or the Disability Advisor at your institution. Our contact details are on page 3.
- Fill in the form in CAPITAL letters using a **black** ballpoint pen. Give us all the details we ask for.
- If you find it difficult to fill in your form someone else may fill it in for you as long as they have your authority to do so.
- Make sure that you sign and date the form and read the student consent section.
- If you are a part-time or distance-learning student, your institution (for example, your college, university or distance-learning provider) must fill in the Certificate of Endorsement. If they don't, we will have to return the form to you and there will be a delay in processing your application.
- Make sure that your assessor or your Disability Advisor signs and dates the form to confirm that the equipment or help (or both) that is set out in your application is essential for you to complete your course.
- After we pay you the DSA, you must send us copies of receipts for the items you buy with your allowance as proof of purchase. You should do this within 28 days of getting your allowance. We cannot become involved in any disagreement you may have with your supplier.
- Your application is only valid for one year of study. You must apply separately for each year of your course. We will not pay the DSA for a course that you have already completed.
- You must tell us if there is any change in your circumstances that might affect any award due to you. For example, if you decide to leave your course before you have completed it and do not transfer to another one, we may ask you to repay some or all of the cost of the equipment.

2.4 What we will do

How we use the information you give us

- Data Protection Act 1998. We will use the information you give us on your form to process your application for the Disabled Students' Allowance. We have a duty to protect the public funds we handle and we may use the information you have given on this form to prevent and detect fraud. We may also share this information for the same purpose with other organisations that handle public funds.
- We need the information you give us to work out whether you are eligible for support and we are the data controller for that information. We will assess your entitlement and send you a letter to tell you how much support you will get from us. We keep your personal information so we can audit our assessment of student support.
- Where necessary, we will pass the information you give us on your DSA application form (and any accompanying evidence) to an Access Centre or to your institution if they are approved to carry out a needs assessment. They will use this to work out what equipment or help you need to do your course. They will send us a full report detailing your needs and how much it will cost.

Processing your application

- We aim to process applications within 21 days of receiving them. However, things can take longer if you have not filled in your application correctly or have not sent us all the evidence we need in support of your application. Please contact us if you do not receive a letter about your DSA application within 28 days to make sure we have received it.
- If we are not completely satisfied that the equipment and/or services that have been recommended for you are suitable, we may still have to refer you to an Access Centre for another assessment before deciding your entitlement. This can take time so it is essential that you apply as early as possible.
- If we refer you to an Access Centre for an assessment of your needs, we will pay the Access Centre's fees. If you have any questions about the assessment carried out by the Access Centre, you should contact them directly. If your assessment is from an approved institution, we will pay the fees for the needs assessment, we will not need to refer you to an Access Centre.

Dealing with your correspondence

- We aim to reply to all written correspondence within 21 days of receiving it.
- We aim to pay all DSA invoices we receive within 21 days providing you have given us all the information that we need.
- Please contact us if you do not receive a reply to your correspondence within 28 days to make sure that we have received it.

Paying your DSA

- Once we have dealt with your application, we will tell you how much you are getting and will arrange payment, either by sending you a cheque to your home address or by paying the money directly into your bank account.
- If you apply to us in good time, we will do our best to make sure that we issue you any funds we approve for the start of your course.

We may pay for **approved** equipment shortly before the start of your course so that it is available at the beginning of your studies. We will only make payments if there is a strong case for you receiving them before your course starts, on the clear understanding that you will repay the money in full if you do not start and continue on your course.

3 Eligibility

We have to confirm that you meet our residence eligibility conditions before we can consider a DSA application.

3.1 Who is eligible to apply for the DSA?

Full-time **undergraduate** students must be working towards an eligible full-time HNC, HND, degree or equivalent level course.

Full-time **postgraduate** students must be working towards a full-time postgraduate course. However, you will not be eligible for the DSA from us if you:

- are doing a postgraduate Diploma in Social Work (DipSW) and will get a postgraduate bursary or award from the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). You should contact them at www.sssc.uk.com for details of the support that is available for disabled students under the SSSC Bursary Scheme; or
- get a bursary or award from a Research Council, including the Arts and Humanities Research Council. You should contact the provider of your bursary or award for advice on any extra support you may be entitled to because of your disability.

Part-time or distance-learning students must be:

- working towards at least 50% of a full-time Higher Education qualification that we support (for example an HNC, HND, degree or an equivalent qualification.) or working towards at least 50% of a full-time postgraduate qualification. For Open University students, this means at least 60 credit points in each academic year; and
- following a programme of study which lasts for more than one academic year but not more than twice the period normally needed to complete a full time equivalent qualification.

3.2 Residence requirements

Whether you are a full time, part-time or distance-learning student you must also meet our residence requirements. Generally you must be:

- ordinarily resident in the UK, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man for three years immediately before the first day of the first academic year of the course; **and**
- ordinarily resident in Scotland on the first day of the first academic year of the course.

Also, if you are not a UK or EU national, you must have 'settled status' in the UK (as set out in the Immigration Act 1971) immediately before the first day of the first academic year in which the course starts.

If you have not been living in the UK only because you, your parents or your husband, wife, partner or civil partner were, for the time being, employed abroad, you may still qualify, depending on the circumstances. If you were in the UK mainly for education purposes, we will not treat you as being ordinarily resident here.

Assistance may also be available to certain other groups of students. You should contact us if you have any questions about your eligibility.

The **relevant date** depends on when your course starts. In 2009-2010, the dates are as follows:

- **1 August 2009** for courses that start between 1 August 2009 and 31 December 2009.
- **1 January 2010** for courses that start between 1 January 2010 and 31 March 2010.
- **1 April 2010** for courses that start between 1 April 2010 and 30 June 2010.
- **1 July 2010** for courses that start between 1 July 2010 and 31 July 2010.

The courts have defined '**ordinary residence**' as 'habitual and normal residence in one place'. It basically means that you, your parents or your husband, wife, partner or civil partner live in a country year after year by choice throughout a set period, apart from temporary or occasional absences such as holidays or business trips. Living here totally or mainly for the purpose of receiving full-time education does not count as being ordinarily resident.

4 The allowances

The DSA comes in three parts:

- the basic allowance;
- an allowance for large items of equipment; and
- an allowance for non-medical personal help.

4.1 The basic allowance

This is a yearly allowance and this year you can apply for up to £1,725 for any small items of equipment you might need. You can also apply for any special food that a doctor has said is necessary for your condition, if this food would cost you extra because you are undertaking a course. You cannot claim for this if you are already receiving support for this from Social Services, or from other public funds.

If you are studying your course on a part-time or distance-learning basis you can apply for help in proportion to the full-time equivalent. For example, in each session, if you are working towards 50% of the full-time equivalent, you will only be eligible for 50% of this allowance.

Items that we can consider under the Basic Allowance include:

- Consumables (paper, tapes, disks, etc);
- Software.

4.2 The allowance for large items of equipment

This allowance is available to you over a whole programme of study but we may make exceptions if there has been a significant gap between courses. It is not a yearly allowance.

If you apply for this allowance, you will first have to have a professional assessment of the equipment you need to help you on your course. If you have not already had such an assessment, we will arrange for you to get one. Please see section 2.2 for further information.

We calculate the allowance for large items of equipment at the start of your programme of study and the allowance is meant to cover the whole programme.

For 2009-10, the maximum you can apply for, for large equipment is £5,160. When we calculate your allowance, we will take into account any equipment you already own or have access to.

We sometimes ask people to lease rather than buy a major item of equipment. This is usually if they only need the equipment for a short time or if they are near the end of their course.

If the equipment you need costs more than £5,160, you can use any unspent basic allowance to make up the difference.

Items that we can consider under the Large Items allowance include:

- Desktop computers;
- Laptop computers;
- Scanners;
- Printers;
- Portable loops;
- Recording devices.

As long as you do not go over the maximum for your course, you can also use the allowances for basic or large items of equipment to pay for:

- approved repairs, alterations or upgrading;
- insurance or extended warranty costs.

4.3 Non-medical personal help

This is a yearly allowance for course-related personal help. Continuing students must give details in the application of the cost and the number of hours you expect to need the service.

If you are unsure about the type of helper you need then please contact your university or college. There is also an information booklet available called 'Employing Support Workers in Higher Education', which you can get from our website.

Support that we can consider under the Non-medical personal help allowance include:

- training on how to use your specialist IT equipment;
- readers for people with visual impairments;
- sign language interpreters;
- lip speakers;
- note-takers;
- helpers for people in wheelchairs.

You can get up to £20,520 in 2009-2010. If your personal help costs more than the maximum for your course for this year, you can also use any unspent basic allowance.

We cannot pay for private lessons or extra academic teaching or support in the subject you are studying. Your institution may meet such costs as part of providing the course.

If you are studying your course on a part-time or distance-learning basis, you can apply for help in proportion to the full-time equivalent. For example, in each session, if you are working towards 50% of the full-time equivalent, you will only be eligible for 50% of this allowance.

5 Other sources of help you can get

5.1 Help from your institution

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) has made it unlawful for providers of Higher Education to discriminate against disabled students by treating them less favourably in their admissions, policies or the services they provide. Under the Act, institutions must make reasonable adjustments so disabled students are not at an unreasonable disadvantage compared to students who are not disabled. The Equality and Human Rights Commission should be able to answer more detailed enquiries about the Act. You can contact them on their helpline at 0845 604 5510 or visit their website at www.equalityhumanrights.com.

An example of a reasonable adjustment could be:

- altering premises where there are physical features that place you at a substantial disadvantage, or
- altering exam procedures to take account of your disability.

You should talk to the Disability Advisor at your institution to find out what facilities will be available to you. We may not pay for some of the facilities that are not available and you should contact us if you are in any doubt about what the DSA can be used for. DSA cannot be used as a contribution towards the infrastructure, administration and general costs of the institution attended by you.

5.2 Tuition fees and living-costs support for full-time students

You may be eligible to apply to us for payment of your tuition fees, a loan, bursary and grants. The support available to you varies depending on where you will be studying, the course you choose to take and when you entered Higher Education. Visit our website at www.saas.gov.uk to apply on-line for this support or to get further information on the support you might get.

If you will not be applying to us for your tuition fees and living-costs support, you must still be eligible to apply to us for support before we can consider a DSA application. This means you cannot apply for support from the DSA if you do not meet our residence conditions. If we are not paying your tuition fees because you have received support from us before and you do not want to apply for a student loan, you can still apply for support from the DSA.

5.3 Tuition fees for part-time and distance-learning students

If you are doing a course of Higher Education (up to and including postgraduate diploma level), you may be eligible to apply for a tuition fee grant of up to £500 in each year of your course. There are a number of conditions that you will have to meet to be eligible for the fee grant. To apply for the new grant, please contact the ILA Scotland helpline on 0808 100 1090.

5.4 Living-costs support for NMSB students

You can apply online at www.saas.gov.uk for a bursary, the Dependants' Allowance, Single Parents' Allowance and the Childcare Allowance. If you can't apply online you should fill in form NMSB1 2009-10 (Application form for Nursing and Midwifery Student Bursary). To apply visit our website at www.saas.gov.uk and apply in line.

You must still be eligible to apply to us for your main support before we can consider a DSA application. If we are not paying your bursary because of previous support, you can still apply for support from the DSA. However, if we are not paying you a bursary because you do not meet our eligibility requirements, you cannot apply for support from the DSA.

5.5 Extra travel costs

You may get help with your extra travel costs if we are satisfied that your disability means that you cannot use public transport. You should write to us to ask for any extra travel costs, preferably at the same time as you send in your application for the DSA. When making an application for excess travel costs, you will need to send proof that your disability means you can't use public transport (if you have not already done so). You must give details of the additional costs, with competitive estimates where possible. We may pay the provider direct, for example, taxi firms, with your written agreement.

- If you are a full time student and eligible to receive support from us by way of tuition fees and living costs, you may apply for travelling expenses for your course in the usual way. We may also consider making a 50% advance payment of normal travel costs in certain circumstances. You should visit our website or contact us if you want more information on travel expenses. You can apply on-line from our website in December each year.

There are limits to the travel expenses we will pay. However, if you have to spend more because of your disability, we may pay you more than the highest amount we would normally pay. We will not normally pay the first £159 of any application. This is the amount which students are expected to meet themselves from their loan, bursary or their own resources.

- If you are a part-time student you may get help with your extra travel costs if we are satisfied that your disability means that you cannot use public transport. Contact us if you want more information.
- If you are a distance-learning student and it is necessary for you to attend a summer school as part of your course, you may be able to apply for travel expenses for this. Contact us if you want more information.

5.6 Hardship and childcare funds

Colleges and universities administer these funds, which provide extra help for full and part time students with particular financial difficulties. Institutions can decide whether to help with the living costs or childcare costs of students who otherwise may not enter education because of their financial circumstances. You may also be able to get help if you have to pay for the cost of any diagnosis of your disability or learning difficulty. If you think you may qualify for help, you should apply to your college or university. If you are eligible for a student loan, you will normally be expected to have taken these out before you can get assistance from these funds. Further details are available from our website.

5.7 VAT exemption

In certain circumstances, you may be eligible for VAT exemption. You should discuss this with your supplier if we approve payment of equipment for you. You should contact HM Revenue and Customs to find out about VAT reliefs for disabled people, or visit their [website www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk).

5.8 Benefits

The Jobcentre Plus assesses students' entitlement to income-related benefits.

- Full-time students are generally not eligible to claim benefits. But full-time students with dependants and students with disabilities may be eligible in certain circumstances.
- If you are currently eligible for certain income-related benefits, you may still be entitled to them if you become a part-time or distance-learning student.

It is important to discuss this with your college, university, Open University or distance-learner provider student advisor as well as your Jobcentre Plus. There is a free and confidential Benefit Enquiry Line (0800 88 22 00) for people with disabilities and their carers.

5.9 Tax credits

Students and their families could receive more money through the Child Tax Credit which the HM Revenue and Customs will pay to those who are responsible for at least one child, whether or not they are in paid work. Students who work more than 16 hours a week could also be eligible for Working Tax Credit. Extra help is also available to those who have a disability or who are caring for children with a disability.

You can find out more information by calling the helpline on 0845 300 3900.

6 Appeals and complaints procedure

How to make an appeal to SAAS

An appeal is a formal request to review a decision we have made on your entitlement to financial support and/or our assessment of how much you should get. An appeal must allege an error on our part and will only be considered if it is based on us having made an incorrect assessment of your factual circumstances and/or an erroneous interpretation of the law.

You can make a formal appeal by writing to tell us why you think our decision or assessment is wrong. Address the envelope to “SAAS Appeals” at the address on page 3 and clearly mark your letter “Formal Appeal” or you can send an email using our website at www.saas.gov.uk/contact.htm. Please put your SAAS reference number on any correspondence.

How to appeal against your needs assessments

If you wish to appeal against the recommendations in your needs assessment you should first of all appeal directly to the institution or Access Centre that carried out your assessment. The Institution or Access Centre that provided your assessment will be able to give you a copy of their appeals’ process. If you are not happy with their response SAAS can appoint an Independent Arbitrator to look at your assessment.

If you are unhappy with the reply you receive from the Independent Arbitrator, you may write to our Chief Executive asking him to review your case (please write to the Chief Executive, SAAS at the address on page 3). You will normally receive a reply within 10 working days. The Chief Executive’s decision is final in terms of the Agency’s procedures. If you are not satisfied with the reply from the Chief Executive, you (or your representative) have the right to refer your case to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) for consideration. Please see the complaints section below for details on how to contact the Ombudsman.

How to make a complaint to SAAS

We would like to hear from you if you feel dissatisfied with any aspect of our service, for example, if you think we have:

- treated you unfairly;
- failed to explain things properly;
- given you wrong or misleading information; or
- have taken too long to deal with your case.

We want to know if things go wrong so that we can put them right and make sure that they do not happen again.

You can make a formal complaint by writing to tell us what has gone wrong. Address the envelope to “SAAS Complaints” at the address on page 3 and clearly mark your letter “Formal Complaint” or you can send an email through our website at www.saas.gov.uk/contact.htm. Please put your SAAS reference number on any correspondence.

What we will do

A senior member of staff will consider your appeal or complaint and will aim to reply to you within 10 working days of receipt. If we cannot do so, we will write to explain why and to tell you when you can expect a full response. If your correspondence is not classed as an appeal or a complaint, we will treat it as general correspondence and aim to reply within 15 working days.

If you are unhappy with the reply you receive, you may write to our Chief Executive asking him to review your case (please write to the Chief Executive, SAAS at the address on page 3). You will normally receive a reply within 10 working days. The Chief Executive's decision is final in terms of the Agency's procedures.

If you are not satisfied with the reply from the Chief Executive, you (or your representative) have the right to refer your case to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) for consideration. The Ombudsman can investigate claims of maladministration but will normally only do so once you have exhausted the Agency's procedures as detailed above. You should contact the Ombudsman, preferably in writing, within 12 months after the day you first became aware of your grounds for complaint. The SPSO's office is based at 4 Melville Street, Edinburgh EH3 7NS.

The SPSO's contact details are:

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman www.spsso.org.uk
Freepost EH641
Edinburgh Tel: 0800 377 7330
EH3 0BR Fax: 0800 377 7331
E-Mail:ask@spsso.org.uk Text: 0790 049 4372

Recording, monitoring and reviewing appeals and complaints

If appeals or complaints reveal shortcomings on our part, we use this information to review and improve our procedures.

Our Management Board review the complaints we have dealt with every 3 months to assess whether there are any patterns or trends that suggest we ought to change our procedures. We keep a record of all the complaints we receive and publish details in our annual reports.

7 Frequently asked questions

How do I find out what equipment or other help I need?

We cannot offer advice about equipment or other types of help. If you need advice you should first contact the Disability Advisor at your institution. Access Centres will only give you an appointment for an assessment for the DSA if we refer you to them. Alternatively, your institution may be authorised to carry out needs assessments and you should contact the Disability Advisor for advice.

I will be getting a dyslexia assessment by an Educational Psychologist. Who pays for the assessment?

We will not pay the costs of diagnosing whether you have a disability or specific learning difficulty. However, your institution may be able to offer help from their Discretionary Funds.

Can I buy equipment before my course begins?

Once we have dealt with your application, we will tell you what equipment we have approved. We may pay for approved equipment shortly before the start of your course so that it is available at the beginning of your studies. We will only make payments if there is a strong case for you receiving them before your course starts, on the clear understanding that you will repay the money in full if you do not start and continue on your course.

We may not pay you for equipment that we have not approved.

What happens to the equipment when I complete my course?

All the equipment you buy with the DSA is, and will stay, your property. You may decide to offer the equipment to your institution for other students to use, but you do not have to do so. You should be aware that if you decide to leave your course before you have completed it and do not transfer to another one, we might ask you to repay some or all of the cost of the equipment.

Will I have to repay my DSA if I leave my course early?

Possibly. We may recover some, or all of your DSA if you withdraw from your course. It will depend on what point of the course you withdraw at and whether you have received money for support that you have not yet bought or received.

What if I transfer to another course and need different equipment?

We can only allow up to the maximum amount of the allowance for special equipment for the whole programme of study. If you have already received the maximum, we cannot give you any more help.

What happens once you have approved my claim for DSA?

Once we have approved your claim for DSA we will send a letter to you letting you know what we have agreed to pay for. We will also send a copy of this letter to the person who carried out your DSA assessment.

We will pay the amount we have agreed in your letter, by the method you requested on your application form (either by cheque or directly into your bank account).

You must purchase all of the equipment we have approved as soon as possible.

What do I do once I have bought all of my equipment?

You must send us receipts of all the equipment you have purchased as soon as possible. If this is going to be longer than 6 weeks you must contact us to explain why.

If the equipment you have purchased comes to less than the amount we have given you, you must send us a cheque made out to "Student Awards Agency for Scotland" for the unspent portion.

Please send us photocopies of all receipts as you will need to keep the originals for warranty purposes.

Can I buy different items to the ones that have been recommended?

No, you must buy the equipment exactly as your assessor recommended. If you are not happy with what your assessor recommended you should contact them to discuss this before purchasing any equipment.

If you purchase items that we have not approved we may seek to recover some of the DSA that we awarded you.

Who can you make payments to?

We can make payments to:

- you;
- your institution; or
- your non medical helper.

We can arrange to pay your non-medical helper direct, when we receive invoices. We will ask you and your helper to sign and date the invoices. If you do not take up this option, you must make sure that you pay your helper as soon as possible after you receive payment from us.

What does the DSA not pay for?

DSA is a personal allowance paid to eligible students who have more costs for their course because of their disability. Your institution has an obligation to provide you with certain facilities to allow you to study. Please see section 5.1.

When do I apply?

Apply as soon as you can before your course starts in order to receive payments promptly. However, you can apply for DSA at any stage of your course.

Does DSA depend on my income?

No, DSA does not depend on your income or the income of your family.

8 Useful contacts

Skill Scotland: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities

Norton Park
57 Albion Road
Edinburgh
EH7 5QY

Tel: 0131 475 2348

Email: admin@skillscotland.org.uk

Website: www.skill.org.uk

Equality and Human Rights Commission

58 Robertson Street
Glasgow
G2 8DU

Tel: 0845 604 5510

Website: www.equalityhumanrights.com

National Union of Students Scotland

29 Forth Street
Edinburgh
EH1 3LE

Tel: 0131 556 6598

Email: mail@nus-Scotland.org.uk

Website: www.nusonline.co.uk