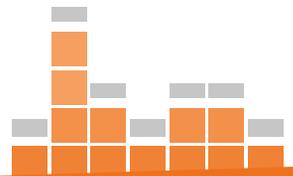


sound advice on

STUDENT FINANCE



Extra help – Disabled Students' Allowances 2016/17

www.studentfinancewales.co.uk



student finance wales
cyllid myfyrwyr cymru



Ariennir gan
Lywodraeth Cymru
Funded by
Welsh Government

What is Student Finance Wales?

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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 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

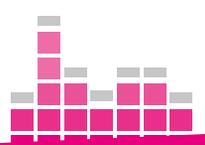
You'll also find regular updates on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube:

 [Facebook.com/SFWales](https://www.facebook.com/SFWales)

 [Twitter.com/SF_Wales](https://twitter.com/SF_Wales)

 [youtube.com/SFWFILM](https://www.youtube.com/SFWFILM)

WHAT'S THIS GUIDE ABOUT?



This guide provides information about Disabled Students' Allowances for new and continuing full-time 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.

Disabled Students' Allowances are grants to help pay the extra costs you may have as a direct result of your disability, including a mental-health condition, or specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia or dyspraxia. You don't have to pay these back.

The allowances can help with the cost of having a person to support you, such as a note-taker, items of specialist equipment, travel and other course-related costs.

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

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

England:

www.gov.uk/studentfinance

Northern Ireland:

www.studentfinancenir.co.uk

Scotland:

www.saas.gov.uk

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NHS-funded students can find out about applying for Disabled Students' Allowances at: www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/955/page/72050

Students getting funding from Research Councils UK (RCUK) can visit the website at: www.rcuk.ac.uk/skills/training/

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

No. You can still get Disabled Students' Allowances without telling your university or college. But if you do tell your university or college about your disability, including a mental-health condition or specific learning difficulty, in complete confidence, it can help make sure you get 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.



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.

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.

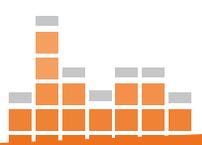
This helps to produce a report recommending any specialist equipment or additional support that could help with your studies. We'll only pay for one Study Needs Assessment unless your course or needs change significantly. If you're unhappy with your initial Study Needs Assessment you should contact us by e-mailing:

SFW_DSA_Team@slc.co.uk

TOP TIP

There's no deadline to apply for Disabled Students' Allowances but the sooner you apply, the better your chances are of having everything you need in place at the start of your course.





You can get Disabled Students' Allowances if you have a disability, including a 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
- 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 Disabled Students' Allowances, even if you got financial support. However, if you received Disabled Students' Allowances for any specialist equipment for a previous course, this may be taken into account.

There's no age limit on receiving Disabled Students' Allowances.

You can also visit: **www.studentfinancewales.co.uk** for more information.



You can't get Disabled Students' Allowances if you're:

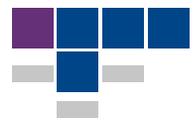
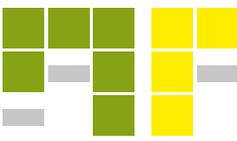
- getting support equivalent to Disabled Students' Allowances from another funding provider
- an EU student
- a sandwich-course student on a full-year placement. (You may still be able to get Disabled Students' Allowances if you're doing certain types of unpaid work experience in the public sector or voluntary sector. If you don't qualify for Disabled Students' Allowances during your placement year, you may be able to get help from the Access to Work scheme.

Visit www.gov.uk/access-to-work for more information.)

- able to get a Department of Health, NHS or other healthcare bursary
- getting funding from Research Councils UK
- a postgraduate student getting an NHS Business Services Authority's bursary for social work courses

You can't get Disabled Students' Allowances for more than one course at the same time.





Part-time students

To be eligible for Disabled Students' Allowances, you must be registered for a part-time 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 or hard of hearing, have a medical condition or have a mental-health condition, you'll need to provide medical evidence of this, such as a letter from your doctor or specialist.

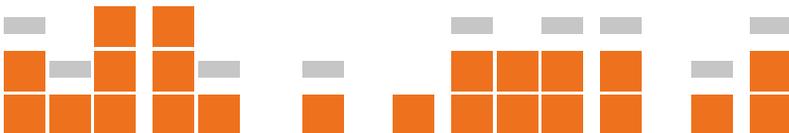
If you have a specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, you must provide evidence in the form of a 'diagnostic assessment' from a psychologist or suitably qualified specialist teacher. If you had your diagnostic assessment before your 16th birthday, it will need to be updated.



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

For disabilities	A report or letter from your GP or 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 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a specialist teacher holding a current Assessment Practising Certificate
For 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 through your university or college's Financial Contingency Fund.



WHAT CAN I GET?

Disabled Students' Allowances help pay the extra costs you may have on your course because of your disability, including a 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.

TOP TIP

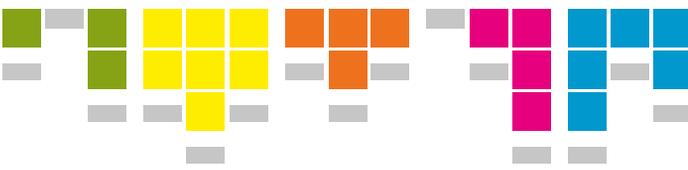
What you can get doesn't depend on your household income but does depend on your needs assessment. See step 4 on page 18 for more details.



Undergraduate students

Specialist Equipment Allowance

What's it for?	It helps buy equipment you may need because of your disability, including a 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. What you get doesn't depend on your income or that of your family.
How's it paid?	The money will be paid direct 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?	<p>The amount shown above is the maximum you can get.</p> <p>The cost of renting equipment will be paid where it's more economical than buying equipment.</p> <p>If you need more help or advice, you can speak to the disability advisor at your university or college.</p>

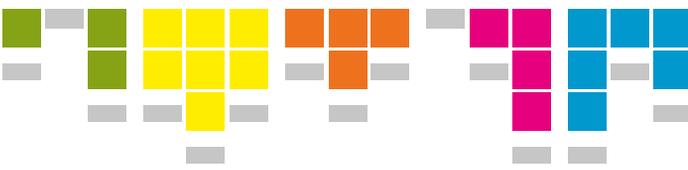


Non-Medical Helper Allowance

What's it for?	It helps to pay for support workers such as readers, sign-language interpreters, note-takers, specialist one-to-one support and other non-medical assistants you need to benefit fully from your course.
How much can I get?	You can get up to £21,181 each academic year. How much you get doesn't depend on your income or that of your family.
How's it paid?	The money will be paid direct 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.

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. You can use it to pay for your Study Needs Assessment.
How much can I get?	You can get up to £1,785 each academic year. How much you get doesn't depend on your income or that of your family.
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 amount shown above is the maximum you can get.</p> <p>You can also use this allowance to pay any travel expenses for attending your Study Needs Assessment.</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 attend 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 get doesn't depend on your income or that of your family.
How's it paid?	The money will be paid direct 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.

For 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 Disabled Students' Allowances you get will depend on your Study Needs Assessment.

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

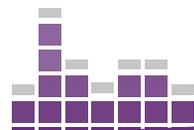
Initial Teacher Training courses (ITT)

If you're already on an ITT course, you can continue to apply for the same package of Disabled Students' Allowances 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 Disabled Students' Allowances package.

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 most of any Maintenance Loan (and some student grants) you can get. Special Support Grant and Disabled Students' Allowances won't be taken into account. For more information visit: www.gov.uk.



So now you know what support is available, how do you get it?

Undergraduate students

STEP 1

I want to apply for Disabled Students' Allowances and other student finance

Apply for student finance online when the application service opens and click on the option to apply for Disabled Students' Allowances in the main application.

We'll then send you an application form (DSASL) to fill in and return to us.

You can also download the shortened form at:

www.studentfinancewales.co.uk

I only want to apply for Disabled Students' Allowances

Download an application form (DSA1) from our website above.

Fill this in and return it to us.

STEP 2

If you're eligible for Disabled Students' Allowances, we'll write to you to arrange a Study Needs Assessment to find out exactly what equipment and support you need.

STEP 3

You should book your Study Needs Assessment as soon as you get our letter telling you to arrange one. To find your nearest Study Needs Assessment centre, go to: **www.dsa-qag.org.uk**

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.

STEP 5

Order equipment and arrange your other support when you get our letter telling you to do so.

STEP 6

Start your course.

STEP 7

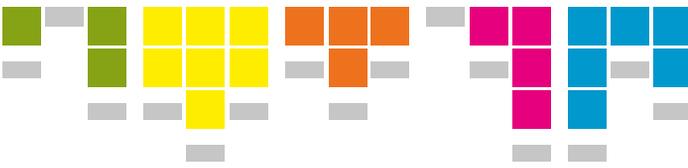
Re-apply for your student finance before the start of your course each year.

If you apply for Disabled Students' Allowances along with your main application for student finance, you won't have to re-apply each year as long as you state on your main application that you want to continue getting them.

TOP TIP

Contact us if your course
or your needs change.





Postgraduate students (not OU students)

If you're a postgraduate student, and you want to apply for Disabled Students' Allowances, you should fill in the Disabled Students' Allowances application form (DSA1) and send it to us. You can download the form at: www.studentfinancewales.co.uk or get one by phoning us (see the contact details on page 20).

NHS students

Students studying a course funded by the NHS can visit the website at: www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/955/page/72050 for information on how they can apply for Disabled Students' Allowances.

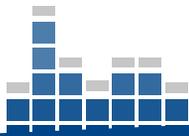
If you're getting an undergraduate social work bursary, you should apply to us.

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 Disabled Students' Allowances from the NHS. However, you can get Disabled Students' Allowances from us if you meet the eligibility conditions.

Research Council funding

If you're getting funding from Research Councils UK contact them about Disabled Students' Allowances. For more information visit: www.rcuk.ac.uk/skills/training/



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 8pm Monday to Friday, and between 9am and 1pm on Saturdays.

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.

Phone: **0800 328 5050** (11.30am to 1.30pm on Tuesdays, and 1.30pm to 3.30pm on 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 Equality Advisory Support Service (EASS) helpline can give information and guidance on discrimination and human rights issues.

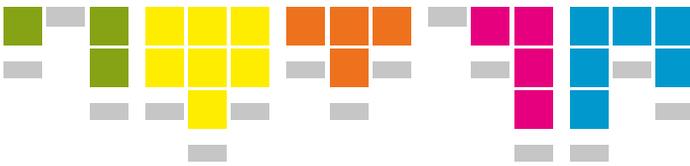
Phone: **0808 800 0082**

Textphone: **0808 800 0084**

Lines are open from 9am to 8pm 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 this guide in braille, large print or audio by emailing with your name, address, and customer reference number quoting reference SFW/BTGB/V16 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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