

Financial Help for Health Care Students with Disabilities or Special Needs.

*A Guide to the NHS Bursary Disabled Students' Allowance
(DSA) for the **2008/09** Academic Year*

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Summary

NHS funded students with a disability or specific learning difficulty may be eligible to apply for additional help to cover extra costs they may incur as a direct result of their disability whilst in training.

Eligible students may receive:

- **A non-medical helpers allowance** – to pay for helpers such as sign language interpreters or note takers etc.
- **A specialist equipment allowance** – for major items of specialist equipment e.g. a computer.
- **A travel allowance** – for travel costs reasonably and necessarily incurred due to a disability.
- **A general disabled students' allowance** – this allowance may be paid towards “other” disability-related spending e.g. Braille paper etc

The *Disabled Students' Allowances* are not means tested and no contribution will be required from the student or their family.

Applicants should complete form *DSA1* providing supporting medical evidence of their disability and how this will result in them incurring extra disability related costs whilst in training. The cost of establishing a disability falls to the applicant and NHS Student Bursaries cannot pay for an applicant to establish their disability.

If an application is accepted, the successful applicant will be referred to an *Access Centre*, who will undertake an assessment of needs by completing a *Study Aids and Strategies Assessment Report*. This report will make recommendations on the extra help and support needed to participate in training. The cost of *Study Aids and Strategies Assessment Report* may be paid for from your Disabled Students Allowances.

Once we have received a *Study Aids and Strategies Assessment Report* we will review the recommendations and determine the appropriate level of support. We will then write to the applicant setting out the level of support to be provided.

The information in this booklet is for guidance only and does not cover all circumstances. If you need more help, write to:

The DSA Team
NHS BSA Student Bursaries
Hesketh House
200-220 Broadway
Fleetwood

Lancashire
FY7 8SS

Or Telephone the student helpline on : 0845 358 6655, or E-mail us at dsa@nhspa.gov.uk

What are Disabled Students' Allowances for and I am I eligible?

The Disabled Students' Allowance, may help pay for extra costs you have to pay in attending your course as a direct result of your disability. The allowances can help with the cost of a non-medical helper, specialist equipment and specific disability related travel costs. You will have to provide medical evidence to support your claim and, if appropriate, undertake an *Assessment of Needs* to determine the type and level of extra disability related support you need.

To be considered for Disabled Students' support through the provisions of the NHS Bursary Scheme, you must show that you qualify for a NHS funded bursary as; an Allied Health Professional; a Nurse or a Midwife; or a Doctor or Dentist.

Specifically:

Allied Health Professions – to be eligible you must be on, or have been accepted onto, a NHS funded course at an English university leading to professional registration as one of the following healthcare professions:

- ☞ Audiologist
 - ☞ Chiropodist
 - ☞ Dental hygienist
 - ☞ Dental therapist
 - ☞ Dietician
 - ☞ Occupational therapist
 - ☞ Operating department practitioner
 - ☞ Orthoptist
 - ☞ Physiotherapist
 - ☞ Prosthetist and orthotist
 - ☞ Radiographer
 - ☞ Speech and Language Therapist
- ☞ *Nurses and Midwives* - to be eligible you must be on, or have been accepted onto, a NHS funded course at an English university leading to professional registration as a nurse or midwife. Enrolled nurses on conversion courses may also be eligible.

NB: If you are studying as either an Allied Health Professional or a Nurse or Midwife at a university outside England, you should apply to your relevant awarding authority and not NHS BSA Student Bursaries.

Doctors and Dentists – to be eligible you must be in year 5 (or beyond) of an undergraduate programme or years 2, 3 or 4 of a graduate programme. It does not matter in which country you are training but you must have been ordinarily domiciled in England prior to the start of your course, otherwise you should apply to your relevant national awarding authority for Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland. Medical and dental students not receiving a NHS funded bursary may wish to apply for support via their Local Education Authority.

You are not eligible for Disabled Students' Allowances if:

- ☞ You are an EU student and receive a 'EU fees only' bursary; or
- ☞ You are a seconded student receiving a salary as opposed to a bursary.

Do I have to tell my college or university about my disability?

No, but it will probably benefit you to do so. It is likely that your university will have a disability advisor who will be able to help with your application and provide information about the support the university gives to students with disabilities. If you are worried about revealing your disability, contact your university or college's disability adviser for confidential advice. Or, you could contact *Skill* or a disability organisation that specialises in your particular disability. You can find contact details for these organisations at the end of this guide.

We strongly advise that your university, especially if it employs a disability officer, should be involved in your Disabled Students' Allowances application.

How do I show that I am eligible?

We must consider all cases where students face extra costs to attend their course because of their disability. If you have a physical disability, a mental-health difficulty or a specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, you may qualify.

If your condition has been documented at an earlier stage, your eligibility for Disabled Students' Allowances should be easily proved. However, you will need to provide evidence that the effects of your condition will mean that you will need to pay extra disability related costs in attending your course. If you are disabled, or have mental-health difficulties, you will need to provide medical proof of your disability, such as a letter from your doctor or specialist.

If you have more than one medical condition, you should provide evidence of both or all of them.

Specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, etc

If you are dyslexic or have a specific learning difficulty, you must provide evidence of your dyslexia or other specific learning difficulty from:

- A qualified psychologist experienced in working with dyslexic adults; *or*
- Someone with a qualification from a professional training course involving assessing adults with dyslexia, such as an OCR Diploma in Specific Learning Difficulties.

The report must have been carried out after your 16th Birthday and must cover literacy skills, intellectual functioning and cognitive processing.

The NHS Student Grants Unit cannot meet the costs of diagnosing your disability for establishing your eligibility for *Disabled Students' Allowances*. If you need a test to establish your disability, but cannot afford the fee, you can apply to your university for help in meeting the costs through the Hardship Funds.

How and to whom do I apply?

To apply for the Disabled Students' Allowance you must first complete a **DSA1** form.

You may make an application at any time and application forms are available from the Forms and Booklets section of the [NHS Student Bursaries website](http://www.nhs.uk/nhsformsandbooklets) or via the following link:

<http://www.nhs.uk/nhsformsandbooklets>

When do I apply?

New students - If you are due to commence a course at any time during the 2008/09 academic year, we advise that you apply as soon as you can. However, you can apply for Disabled Students' Allowances at any stage of your course.

Existing students - If you are already in training, in receipt of a NHS funded bursary and you have not applied for help from the DSA, you may apply at any time during the academic year. If you are in your final year, you are advised to apply as soon as possible.

Do Disabled Students' Allowances depend on my income?

No, Disabled Students' Allowances do not depend on your income or the income of your family.

What do the Disabled Students' Allowances cover?

Disabled Students' Allowances are not paid as a set amount. We will determine

what you need and how much it will cost, usually by asking that you have an assessment of needs undertaken at an *Access Centre*. This assessment will not test or determine whether you are disabled but will result in a *Study Aids and Strategies Assessment Report* which makes recommendations on the extra help and support you will need. You will only get enough money from the Disabled Students' Allowances to cover the cost of the equipment or support you need because of your disability (as well as the cost of the Study Aids and Strategies Assessment Report).

However, there is a limit to the amount of help you can get from the Disabled Students' Allowances. The rates shown below are the maximum you can get. They are meant to support people with a high level of need, so most people will get less than the maximum.

The rates of allowances for 2008 - 2009 academic year are as follows:

Specialist equipment allowance	Up to £5,031 for the whole of your course.
Non-medical helper's allowance	Up to £20,000 a year.
General disabled students' allowance	Up to £1,680 a year.
Travel allowance	Payable for disability-related extra travel costs which have been reasonably and necessarily incurred

Specialist equipment allowance

This allowance is to help you buy any items of equipment you may need. You can also use it to pay for any repair, technical support, insurance or extended warranty costs arising from owning that equipment. We recommend that you insure your specialist equipment and your Disabled Students' Allowances can be used to pay the additional insurance premiums. We can also reimburse costs you have to pay to rent, rather than buy, a major item of equipment if this is more economical. You can apply for the specialist equipment allowance at any time during your course. If your *Access Centre* assessment recommends initial training in using any equipment this cost may be reimbursed.

If you apply for help towards the end of your course you may still be able to get a new piece of equipment if there is evidence of need, but it is likely that we will ask you to consider if there are more economical alternatives to buying equipment. For example, you could rent or hire equipment from a supplier or loan it from your university. Or, non-IT options, such as human support, may prove more effective when the time left is just a few weeks.

Non-medical Helper's Allowance

This allowance may provide for any helpers, such as readers, sign-language interpreters, note-takers and other non-medical assistants you need to benefit fully from your course. Disabled Students' Allowances are not meant to help with disability-related spending which you would have to pay, whether you were following your course or not. Your local social services department may help you with these personal costs.

If you have dyslexia or another condition which would benefit from extra tutorial support, you could receive funds under this allowance to pay for extra support for literacy or personal management problems which arise from your dyslexia but you cannot use the allowance to pay for extra tuition in subjects that are part of your course.

General Disabled Students' Allowance

This allowance may be paid towards other disability-related spending and might be used to buy items such as Braille paper, or to top up the other two allowances, if necessary.

Travel Costs

If you have to pay extra travel costs to attend your course because of your disability you may be eligible to have some of these costs reimbursed but you not normally receive help towards everyday travel costs that any student would expect to have.

What happens once I have completed and returned the DSA1 form?

Once we have received your application, we will determine your eligibility for the Disabled Students' Allowances.

If we reject your application we will write to you explaining our decision.

If your application is accepted you will be referred to an *Access Centre*, who will undertake an assessment of your needs by completing a *Study Aids and Strategies Assessment Report*. Access Centres charge a fee for the assessment, which may be paid from the Disabled Students' Allowances. For this you will receive a report that should make recommendations about the types of equipment and other support you will need, how much it will cost and where to get it from. The report should also identify any training you might need to make best use of the equipment recommended. The Access Centre will not test for, or determine, if you have a disability.

You should not ask an Access Centre to undertake a Study Aids and Strategies Assessment Report until your eligibility for Disabled Students' Allowances has been confirmed.

How do I get the help I need?

Once we have received your Study Aids and Strategies Assessment Report we will review the recommendations and determine the level of support appropriate to your circumstances. We will then write to you setting out your allowances.

It is then up to you to make arrangements to ensure that you acquire the necessary help we have agreed to support. Remember your Study Aids and Strategies Assessment Report will most probably have identified a particular supplier of equipment or support. Equipment suppliers will normally offer an extended warranty to cover the whole of your course and a comprehensive after sales service. It is expected that they will be able to supply all or most of the equipment and set up any equipment and install agreed specialist software etc.

What happens to the equipment when my course ends?

All equipment bought with the Disabled Students' Allowances will normally stay your property. However, you may decide to offer the equipment either to your university or to the NHS Student Grants Unit for other students to use, but you do not have to do this.

Will I have to repay my Disabled Students Allowances if I leave my course early?

Possibly. We may have to recover all or part of your Disabled Students' Allowances if you abandon your course, or do not enrol in training as expected.

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

Once you have received the maximum special equipment allowance allowable, you cannot receive any further special equipment allowance. This means that if you have already received the maximum amount before you transfer courses, you are not eligible for any further allowance for special equipment. You will still be eligible for the other allowances and travel costs on your new course. If you transfer to a course not covered by the NHS Bursary Scheme, you will have to apply to your Local Education Authority for support.

What if I have to repeat part of my course?

We may in certain circumstances, be able to continue making payments of your Disabled Students' Allowances if, for reasons associated with your disability, you have to repeat periods of study or you need extended study. This will mainly depend on whether you continue to receive a NHS funded bursary.

What do I do if I am not satisfied?

We aim to provide a prompt and efficient service and where necessary explain clearly the reasons for our decisions and actions. We hope that you will be happy

with the way we deal with your Disabled Students' Allowances application but if you feel that the wrong decision has been reached or you are not satisfied with the service provided. Please write, explaining your concerns, to:

The Section Manager
NHS BSA Student Bursaries
Hesketh House
200-220 Broadway
Fleetwood
FY7 8SS

Email: dsa@nhspa.gov.uk

What other Financial Support is available?

Although most full-time students are not entitled to social security benefits, certain students in vulnerable groups, including lone parents and disabled students may be eligible for social security benefits. If you want to take a full-time course of higher education, you should ask your Jobcentre Plus office and your Local Authority how this may affect your entitlement to benefits. You can also contact *Skill* for information on benefits and studying.

If you are eligible for benefits, Jobcentre Plus may take account of any income you receive through grants or loans under the main student support arrangements. If your partner is eligible for benefits, Jobcentre Plus may take account of your student income in the same way when they work out his or her benefits. They do not take account of support towards your tuition fees and help from Disabled Students' Allowances.

There is a free and confidential Benefit Enquiry Line on 0800 882 200 for people with disabilities and their carers. If you use a minicom, dial 0800 243 355.

A Step by Step guide to applying for the Disabled Students' Allowance.

Step 1 – Make sure you have **recent** evidence of a disability or specific learning difficulty and that this evidence indicates that you will incur extra disability-related costs whilst in training

Step 2 – Download and complete form *DSA1* from the Student Bursaries website and return it to us, remembering to attach the required evidence and documentation.

Step 3 – Based on the information contained in your *DSA1* form, we will determine your eligibility for the Disabled Students' Allowances and we will write to you explaining our decision.

Step 4 – If your application for the Disabled Students Allowances is accepted, we will give you written approval to approach an Access Centre to have a Study Aids and Strategies Assessment Report undertaken.

Step 5 – Contact an Access Centre to arrange an Assessment of Needs be undertaken and a Study Aids and Strategies Assessment Report to be produced on your behalf.

Step 6 – Send your Study Aids and Strategies Assessment Report to us.

Step 7 – We will use the information contained in your Study Aids and Strategies Assessment Report to determine the level of extra help required. We will write to you setting out the level of Disabled Students' Allowances awarded and the arrangements for paying the allowances.

List of Useful Organisations

Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities

Chapter House
18-20 Crucifix Lane
London
SE1 3JW

Helpline: 0800 328 5050

Minicom: 0800 068 2422

E-mail: info@skill.org.uk

Website: <http://www.skill.org.uk/>

National Network of Assessment Centres (NNAC)

Administration Centre
The Royal National College
HEREFORD
HR1 1EB

Phone: 01752 232278

Minicom: 01752 232278

E-mail: admincentre@nnac.org

Website: <http://www.nnac.org/index.html>

National Union of Students (NUS)

Nelson Mandela House
461 Holloway Road
London
N7 6LJ

Phone: 020 7561 6500

E-mail: nusuk@nus.org.uk

Website: <http://www.nusonline.co.uk/>

Student Support Agency for Scotland (SAAS)

Gyleview House
3 Redheughs Rigg
Edinburgh
EH12 9HH

Phone: 0845 111 1711

E-mail: saas.geu@scotland.gov.uk Website: www.student-support-saas.gov.uk

The NHS (Wales) Student Awards Unit

3rd Floor
14 Cathedral Road
CARDIFF
CF11 9LJ

Phone: 029 2019 6167

Website: www.wales.nhs.uk

Department for Education and Learning (Northern Ireland) (DELNI)

Adelaide House
Adelaide Street
Belfast
BT2 8FO

Phone: 028 9025 7710

Fax: 028 9025 7747

Website: www.delni.gov.uk/studentsupport

Adult Dyslexia Organisation (ADO)

336 Brixton Road
London
SW9 7AA

Phone: 020 7924 9559

Website: <http://www.adult-dyslexia.org/>

The British Dyslexia Association (BDA)

Unit 8, Bracknell Beeches
Old Bracknell Lane
Bracknell RG12 7BW

Helpline: 0845 251 9002

Fax: 0845 251 9005

E-mail: helpline@bdadyslexia.org.uk

Website: <http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/>

Dyslexia Action

Park House
Wick Road
Egham
Surrey
TW20 0HH

Phone: 01784 222300

E-mail: info@dyslexiaaction.org.uk

Website: <http://www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk>

Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB)

105 Judd Street
London
WC1H 9HE

Helpline: 0845 766 9999

E-mail: See website

Website: <http://www.rnib.org.uk/student>

Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID)

Head Office:

19-23 Featherstone Street
London
EC1Y 8SL

Information Line: 0808 808 0123 (freephone)

Textphone: 0808 808 9000 (freephone)

E-mail: helpline@rnid.org.uk Website: <http://www.rnid.org.uk/>
