

A photograph of a woman with curly hair and a man in a pink shirt looking at a tablet and papers. The woman is holding a grey tablet, and the man is holding a yellow pencil and looking at a document. They appear to be in a professional or educational setting.

An NHS Bursary student's guide to Disabled Students Allowances 2016/17

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1. About this guide

The information in this booklet is for guidance only and will not cover all circumstances. It is intended to provide information about Disabled Students Allowances (DSAs) for new and continuing NHS Bursary funded students who are undertaking pre-registration healthcare courses in England from 1 September 2016 to 31 August 2017. It also applies to medical and dental students who are ordinarily resident in England at the start of their course but who may be undertaking their training in other UK countries.

DSAs are available to contribute to the additional costs that a student is obliged to incur in relation to their studies, because of their disability. If you are eligible for an NHS Bursary and have a disability or specific learning difficulty you may also qualify for DSAs.

The Equality Act 2010 considers a person as disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on their ability to carry out normal daily activities. Read more at:

<https://www.gov.uk/definition-of-disability-under-equality-act-2010>



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2. What are DSAs?

DSAs are grants to help pay towards the extra costs you may incur in attending your course as a direct result of your disability. This can include a mental health condition, a physical condition or a specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia or dyspraxia.

DSAs are not subject to means testing and you do not usually have to pay them back. However, if you leave your course before completing it and you have recently purchased or received equipment which you no longer require for your course, you will be asked to make repayment.

Similarly, if you continue on your course but do not purchase the equipment you have received a DSAs payment for, you will be asked to repay the full amount awarded.

DSAs can help with the cost of specialist equipment or having a non-medical person to assist you with any additional support you may require on your course, items of specialist equipment, travel and other study-related costs. There's no age limit to receive DSAs.

Both full-time and part-time students can apply for DSAs. If you are awarded DSAs, this will not affect any other benefits you may receive.

DSAs are not intended to pay for:

Disability-related expenditure that would be incurred if you were not attending a higher education course.

Costs that arise irrespective of your attendance on a course

Services which can reasonably be expected to be provided by your university

Items or services which you are receiving support from other disability-related funding sources - e.g. Mobility Allowance.

3. Am I eligible for DSAs?

Any previous study won't affect your eligibility for DSAs, even if you received financial support to undertake it. However, if you received DSAs for any specialist equipment for a previous course, this will be taken into account.

Medical and dental students

Medical and dental students who are ordinarily resident in England at the start of their course are supported by NHS Bursary funding in their later years of training. This is from the fifth year of an undergraduate course and during years 2 to 4 of a four year graduate entry programme.

If you have applied for DSAs in previous years through another funding body, such as Student Finance England (SFE), we will normally not send you for a further Needs Assessment and will continue the support you are already receiving. However, if it is more than five years since you were last assessed or more than two years since you last studied you may be asked to go for another Needs Assessment.

If you are a medical or dental student who is ordinarily resident in Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland, you can find out about the DSAs funding that may be available to you from the following websites:

Scotland	www.saas.gov.uk
Wales	www.studentfinancewales.co.uk
Northern Ireland	www.studentfinancenir.co.uk

How do I show that I am eligible?

If you're physically disabled, blind, partially sighted, deaf, hard of hearing 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 a full diagnostic report. This must have been carried out after the age of 16 by a practitioner psychologist or a suitably qualified specialist teacher holding a current Assessment Practising Certificate.

You will have to pay for any tests you need to prove you are 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.

If you need more information, the disability advisor at your university will be able to help or advise you.



4. How do I apply for DSAs?

You must apply for DSAs through your Bursary Online Support System (BOSS) account. The link to make your application will appear on the home page after you submit your main NHS Bursary application. Please send your supporting medical evidence to:

**NHS Student Bursaries
Ridgway House
Northgate Close
Middlebrook
Horwich
Bolton
BL6 6PQ**

Don't forget to include a copy of your student coversheet with everything you post to us. This can be printed from the 'Documents' section of your BOSS account.

We cannot pay any costs associated with providing diagnostic evidence.

Make sure you send everything to us by recorded or Special Delivery post, secure the envelope with tape and include a self-addressed envelope with recorded or Special Delivery pre-paid on it so you can track the return of your documents once they leave us.

Your documents will be scanned and if you include a self-addressed return envelope with the postage paid on it, we can return them to you within 15 working days of receipt.

If you don't include a pre-paid return envelope, we will be unable to return these documents to you.

You are advised to apply for DSAs as soon as possible to enable support to be put in place close to the start of your academic year.

What happens next?

Once you've applied for DSAs, we may ask you to arrange an appointment with an Independent Needs Assessor 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 approved Study Needs Assessment Centre go to:

<http://www.dsa-qag.org.uk/find-an-assessment-centre>

Please do not arrange a Study Needs Assessment until we have told you that your DSAs application has been approved.

A Study Needs Assessment helps us work out how we can support your needs during your time at university. It's not an exam or test – it's 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 assessor will work out what you need to help you get the most from your time at university.



5. What help can I receive from DSAs?

There's a range of help available, which is described in more detail in this section. DSAs are split into four different allowances which cover disability-related costs or expenses incurred while you are studying.

Because DSAs are designed to cover individual needs, they are not paid at set rates. The amounts given below are the maximum amounts that are payable and are aimed at supporting those with a high level of need, though most students will need less.

The amounts are set out below:

Full-time and part-time students	Maximum allowance 2016/17 academic year
Specialist equipment allowance	Up to £5,214 for the duration of the course
Non-medical helper's allowance	Up to £20,725 each academic year
General allowance	Up to £1,741 each academic year
Travel allowance	Uncapped



Specialist equipment allowance

This allowance is available to help you buy any major items of specialist equipment you need because of your disability, mental health condition or specific learning difficulty.

If you need a computer, or your existing computer doesn't meet the specifications set out in your Study Needs Assessment, DSAs can help with the cost of this. If you're applying for DSAs for the first time from 2016/17, you'll be required to make a personal contribution of £200 towards the cost of any computer.

DSAs may also pay for repairs, technical support, insurance or extended warranty costs arising from owning that equipment.

Non-medical helper's (NMH) allowance

This allowance is to help pay for support workers or other non-medical helpers that you may need to benefit fully from your course. The amount of NMH allowance you are awarded will not depend on your household income, but on your individual needs whilst you attend your course.

It is important that you receive good quality support that is provided by individuals who:

- are trained to provide the right level and type of support
- recognise and respect the boundary between supporting you to access your studies and providing academic support

DSAs NMH services should also be provided by support workers who have the appropriate employed or self-employed status. The type of non-medical help you get will depend on your individual needs, but your support workers should have a good understanding of the support you need and be reliable and trustworthy.

To get the most effective help possible from your support worker, you should let them know if you have any specific requirements. For example, if you have a note taker you should let them know what font and text size is best for you. You should also give them a copy of your timetable and let them know if any class times or rooms change.

General allowance

The general allowance may be used for miscellaneous expenditure you may have as a direct result of your disability which are not covered by the other allowances. It can also be used to supplement the specialist equipment allowance and NMH allowance, if necessary.

If you are asked to attend a Study Needs Assessment, the general allowance will be used to pay for the assessment as well as any travel expenses for attending.

Travel allowance

If help with travel is recommended in your Study Needs Assessment, the travel allowance may be used to pay additional expenditure for travel in the UK, to attend or participate in your course and/or practice placements, if it has been reasonably incurred because of your disability.

The travel allowance is calculated as the excess between public transport costs and the mode of travel you are required to use because of your disability e.g. a taxi. For example, if you need to travel by taxi rather than by public transport because of mobility or visual difficulties, then the DSAs will cover the additional expenditure that represents.

The travel allowance will normally be paid directly to the supplier of the services you use (for example, a taxi firm) or, if you prefer, we may agree to pay it directly to you so that you can pay the supplier yourself.



6. Useful information and contacts

We can provide documents in large print or Braille upon request. Please email nhsbsa.communicationsteam@nhs.net with your requirements.

After reading this booklet, if you have any further questions about DSAs or your NHS Bursary, please:

use our 24/7 **Ask Us** service

 search for **NHS Student Bursaries** on Facebook

 follow us on Twitter: **@NHSBSA_Students**

 visit our website: www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/Students

 email: nhsbsa.sbaccount@nhsbsa.nhs.uk

 telephone: **0300 330 1345**

You can also contact the Disability Alliance who provide advice to disabled students:

Freephone: **0800 328 5050**

Email: skill4disabledstudents@disabilityalliance.org