

# Disabled people can't do university – can they?

## Yes, of course you can, with help from a Disabled Student's Allowance!

This document explains the FREE help and support you are entitled to, and how you can claim it.

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### What is a Disabled Student's Allowance?

A free grant from the government to help with the extra costs of studying at university as a result of your disability – these MAY include

- People to help - e.g. note takers, sign language interpreters, mentors etc.
- Equipment – a computer with specialist software (e.g. text-to-speech, voice recognition, mind mapping etc.) and training to use all of this.
- Digital recorder / daisy book player
- Allowance for printing / photocopying, Braille paper etc
- Allowance for non-core textbooks
- Extra travel costs

(The actual support package will be determined by an assessment of your individual needs)

Full DSA details are on the website [www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance](http://www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance) under “extra help” or direct link:

[http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/EducationAndTraining/HigherEducation/DG\\_10034898](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/EducationAndTraining/HigherEducation/DG_10034898)

### What counts as a disability?

Any sight, hearing or mobility impairment, specific learning difficulties (i.e. dyslexia, Asperger's, AD(H)D etc), mental health condition or certain long term medical conditions (such as epilepsy, MS, diabetes), counts, as long as it has an adverse effect on your ability to study.

### Am I eligible?

All UK full time undergraduates on recognised degree courses [including foundation degrees] are eligible. If you are studying part time and doing at least 25% you are also eligible. Postgraduates can also apply.

You will need to provide medical evidence, or a full dyslexia assessment done after your 16<sup>th</sup> birthday to qualify.

## How do I apply?

You can download an application form or apply online at [www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance](http://www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance) or phone Student Finance England on 0845 300 5090 [textphone 08450604 4434]

Or, you can simply tick the box “Do you have a disability? Or DSA” on the student loan application form and they will send you the relevant form.

## When do I apply?

As soon as you have filled in your UCAS application, you will be asked to fill in your student loan application – tick the DSA box.

## What happens after I apply?

You will receive a letter approving your application and telling you to arrange an “assessment of need”. This is a discussion with a specialist who will advise you what support or equipment should be provided to assist you on your chosen course. Once you have approved the report, you will be told how to order the equipment, and how to arrange any personal help.

## Where can I get really good advice?

Contact our Disability Adviser John Conway on 01285 652531 ext 2234 or preferably by email at [john.conway@rau.ac.uk](mailto:john.conway@rau.ac.uk)

He will explain how the DSA system works, how to apply and what help you can get. He can also explain what the University itself will provide you with [for example lectures notes in advance, coursework extensions or exam adjustments etc]. When you visit for an Open Day or RAU Experience Day, ask to meet him and discuss any questions you may have face to face.

## Useful contacts:

The following organisations can give you specific advice about your disability:

- BDA – British Dyslexia Association  
[www.bda-dyslexia.org.uk](http://www.bda-dyslexia.org.uk)
- RNIB – Royal National Institute of Blind people  
[www.rnib.org.uk/student](http://www.rnib.org.uk/student)
- RNID – Royal National Institute for Deaf people  
[www.rnid.org.uk](http://www.rnid.org.uk)
- MIND – the organisation for better mental health  
[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)