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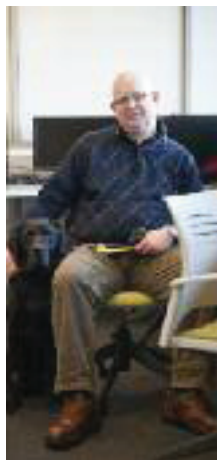


## Learning Support for students in Higher Education Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs)



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## Learning Support for Students in Higher Education

### Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs)

The Disabled Students' Allowance is a supplementary allowance available to students who may incur extra expense in Higher Education due to their disability. It is intended to help disabled students benefit fully from their course and it is not means tested.

### There are four elements of DSA support:

- Non-medical help: for students requiring non-medical personal assistance e.g. readers for visually impaired students or sign-language interpreters for hearing impaired students;
- Specialist Equipment allowance: for help with the purchase of equipment necessary because of the student's disability e.g. computer, Braille printer, Dictaphone, Specialist Software etc.
- General allowance: for general expenses arising from attendance at the course e.g. extra photocopying, special dietary requirements etc.
- Travel allowance: for extra travel costs you have to pay as a result of disability and not normally for everyday travel costs. You will have to pay the equivalent to the public transport rate towards your travel.

### The maximum rates for students undertaking full-time undergraduate courses are:

|                                |                |                |
|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Non-medical Personal Helper    | (per annum)    | £20,938        |
| Specialist Equipment Allowance | (whole course) | £5,266         |
| General Allowance              | (per annum)    | £1,759         |
| Travel Allowance               |                | No upper limit |

### The maximum rates for students undertaking part-time undergraduate courses are:

|                                |                |                |
|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Non-medical Personal Helper    | (per annum)    | £15,703        |
| Specialist Equipment Allowance | (whole course) | £5,266         |
| General Allowance              | (per annum)    | £1,319         |
| Travel Allowance               |                | No upper limit |

To apply, you must first make contact with the DSA officer at your Education and Library Board to determine your eligibility for Disabled Students' Allowances.

You should then contact the Student Support Officer at your campus, who deals with student disabilities. Your Student Support Officer will make arrangements to assess your needs and additional learning requirements.

The application for DSA will then be made through your adviser to the Board. It must be supported by evidence of the disability (e.g. from a doctor or educational psychologist post-16 report), recommendations on the form of support needed and costs. You can apply for Disabled Students' Allowances during the course as well as at the beginning and, in certain circumstances, your application can be considered before you start the course. DSA is paid directly from your Education and Library Board to you or to the supplier of specialist services. You do not have to repay this help.

**For further advice and information please contact the DSA Officer at your ELB.**

### You can apply for DSA if you have a:

- Physical Disability
- Medical Condition
- Dyslexia
- Dyspraxia
- Autistic Spectrum Condition
- Mental Health Issue
- Visual Impairment
- Hearing Impairment

**If you would like an informal chat about the DSA process, please contact the Student/Learning Support Officer at your campus. Below are their details:**

### Dungannon Campus

Paula Walsh  
Tel: 0845 603 1881 ext 3614  
Email: paula.walsh@swc.ac.uk

### Enniskillen Campus

Imelda Treacy  
Tel: 0845 603 1881 ext:2225  
Email: Imelda.Treacy@swc.ac.uk

### Omagh Campus

Judith McCusker  
Tel: 0845 603 1881 ext 5226  
Email: judith.mccusker@swc.ac.uk

## DSA Case Study

Alice\* has mental health difficulties and receives financial support through the Disabled Student Allowance (DSA) as a result.

As part of her condition, Alice experiences low concentration, poor motivation, low self-esteem and she is prone to panic attacks and as a result of medication, Alice often suffers from tiredness and sleeplessness, which can be exacerbated by stress and pressure.

This combination of issues was affecting Alice's ability to focus on her higher education programme at the College and she was advised to contact her local Student Support Officer to talk about her health issues and the support services available at the College to assist her with her studies.

Alice was assigned with the help of a Study Skills Tutor, who works closely with Alice on appropriate approaches and strategies to facilitate effective study and learning. Together they work on note-taking, planning, organisational and research skills.

Alice also receives mentoring support from her Study Skills Tutor, which encourages continuity of study and self-esteem so that she can effectively cope with the demands of her course.

This tailored support service has enabled Alice to work independently at her own pace and she is on target for successful completion of her higher education programme.

\* not real name

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