



SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH SEND

WHO IS A DISABLED STUDENT?

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- Universities will use the Equality Act 2010 definition of disability which defines a disabled person as having a “physical or mental impairment that has a ‘substantial’ and long-term’ negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities.”
 - In the context of being a student this might include affecting their academic activities such as note taking, writing, researching, reading large volumes of text and moving between locations.

THIS DEFINITION INCLUDES STUDENTS WHO:

- are deaf or hard of hearing,
- are blind or partially sighted,
- have a physical disability, and/or mobility difficulties,
- have a specific learning difficulty (e.g., dyslexia or dyspraxia),
- have a developmental learning or behavioural condition (e.g., AD(H)D),
- are on the autism spectrum (including Asperger Syndrome),
- have a mental health condition (e.g., depression, anxiety),
- have a long-term medical condition (e.g., chronic fatigue syndrome, asthma, epilepsy, diabetes, cancer, HIV),
- have a combination of these.

THE THREE MAIN AREAS OF SUPPORT FOR DISABLED STUDENTS AT UNIVERSITY

- Support comes from three different sources at university, this may be different from the support bodies your students had whilst at school and can seem disjointed or separated from what they are used too.
- The university – The institution they are applying for will provide support through inclusive teaching practises and reasonable adjustments. It is important to note that the support that universities can offer will be academic focused. For example, students will be able to access flat-floored and accessible rooms, extended examinations and note takers.
- Funding – Students eligible for student finance can also apply for Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) which provides resources on top of their normal funding to meet the costs of identified specialist support.
- External Providers – This includes social services, care providers and charities, this can include support such as personal care and living skills including transport support etc.

SUPPORT FROM THE UNIVERSITY

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- What support was in place at school or college. This gives the university a good starting point. Although please remember that support may not be like-for-like.
 - Any exam arrangements they have had in the past I.e., extended timings and breaks, as these do not transfer automatically from FE to, HE.
 - Any other disability requirements I.e., alternative accommodation.

TELLING A UNIVERSITY ABOUT A DISABILITY

Disclosure and confidentiality

- Students should disclose a disability on their UCAS form in the 'Disability/Special Needs' section.
- Select the appropriate disability from the options in 'See List'.
- Add any additional information in the Special Needs text box.
- The information disclosed will allow universities to make contact to talk about support.
- Disability information is treated sensitively and will only be shared with the relevant people within each university.
- If students don't disclose on their application form, they can disclose directly to the university at any point afterwards.
- When applying for university, it is important for students to disclose their disability (even if they are not sure if they have a disability/it has not been diagnosed yet) on their UCAS application. Initially, this is the only way that the institution will know that the student has a disability and will need support. It is a **myth** that having a disability will affect their application.

DISABLED STUDENTS' ASSESSMENT & SUPPORT

What to tell universities about

- Previous support requirements at school or college, such as support in class (these arrangements won't transfer automatically).
- Previous exam arrangements which were made as a result of a disability (these arrangements won't transfer automatically).
- Any additional disability-related requirements that might be needed, such as alternative accommodation. It is likely that these additional arrangements will however be dealt with by another department.

DISABLED STUDENTS' ALLOWANCES

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- Government grant made available to disabled students to pay for disability-related equipment and support over and above the reasonable adjustments offered by universities.
 - Most UK students with evidence of a disability are eligible.
 - Not means-tested, not a loan, nothing has to be paid back.
 - Offered alongside standard student finance package, or on its own.
 - Now offered as one single allowance rather than separate funds.
 - It is the student's responsibility to apply and follow up on any instructions that are given by the funding body. DSA is not connected to the university – but they can offer support.

APPLYING FOR DISABLED STUDENTS' ALLOWANCES

Apply



Apply early! You can apply from March onwards, even if you don't know which university you're going to.

Don't wait



Don't wait until you arrive at university as your support may be delayed.

Find out

Find out more about DSA at: www.gov.uk/disabledstudentsallowances

DISABILITY SUPPORT

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- Most support services will be supporting many 1,000s of students at any one time – students need to be prepared to be proactive and engaged with their support.
 - The student will be the primary contact, not a parent or supporter.
 - Support at University will be different to school and will take time to set up.
 - There is a clear emphasis on skill development and self-reliance in preparation for employment.
 - University support is focussed on academic support and will not support social or personal care – this will be the responsibility of the student to arrange.

BREAKDOWN

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- Engage early
 - Make the University aware via the UCAS/application form;
 - Apply for Student Finance and DSA as soon as possible.
 - Students need to be clear on all the steps they need to take, and understand who has responsibility for what – there is a lot of admin!
 - Keep in touch with the University – if students have questions or think someone should have been in touch, get in touch.

SCENARIO 1 WILL I BE OFFERED A DSA?

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- Beth has had an EHCP at school and has disclosed a mental health condition on her UCAS form. Disability Services invite Beth to register with their service and to provide medical evidence.
 - Beth provides her EHCP which confirms that she has had periods of low mood and disruptive behaviour at school and was provided with mentoring and access to a break out room at times of high stress.
 - Beth also provides a letter from her GP that confirms she has reported experiencing low mood.
 - Beth's mum has also been in touch to say that Beth must have the same support that she had at school under the Equality Act.

SCENARIO ANSWER

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- The EHCP and GP letter are not evidence of a disability
 - Beth would not qualify for DSA at this stage so is unlikely to be offered a mentor, but access to a quiet space is something we could discuss
 - Disability Services would work with Beth to see if there was another route to supporting evidence, and in the meantime look at general reasonable adjustments that may meet her needs.
 - The Service would need to work with Beth and her Mum to manage expectations and focus on what can be done now, and to reinforce the route to additional future support.

SCENARIO 2

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- Ali arrives at University at the start of his course and contacts the Service to let them know he has arrived and to ask about support, as none seems to be available.
 - Ali tells the Service that he is blind and has a range of social care needs. Ali hasn't applied for DSA or disclosed his disability on his UCAS form. He is angry that he has no support and indicates that he has been in his room for 2 days with no access to food or support. He has not been to any teaching or other activities.

SCENARIO ANSWER

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- The focus for the Service will be to meet Ali's essential needs and therefore will work with services across the University to get Ali engaged with basic support.
 - There will need to be discussion with the teaching school as well as assessing what options there might be for support.
 - The Service and School may need to advise Ali to suspend his studies and transfer to the next academic year, allowing an opportunity for assessment and for implementation of support.



**ANY
QUESTIONS?**



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