

Disabled Students Allowance

Welcome to Advice Direct... the written information service from Guild Advice.

This leaflet is designed to provide financial advice and information for **Disabled Students** (with home-fee status) who are studying at Birmingham University. It looks at financial assistance for disability-related costs, other sources of funding, and what to do if you experience difficulties.

For More Information on general money issues for students in Higher Education see: 'Advice Direct... Money Matters'.

Disabled Students' Allowance

What is DSA?

This allowance is to help cover the extra costs that you incur on your course because of your disability or learning difficulty, such as specialised computer equipment, note-takers, or extra tutorial support.

You can get help with the costs of:

- specialist equipment, e.g. a computer if you need one because of your disability
- non-medical helpers
- extra travel because of your disability
- other disability-related costs of studying

How Do I Apply?

You should apply by contacting Student Finance England and:-

- If you're only applying for DSA you will need to fill out a DSA slim' form
- If you are applying for other funding from Student Finance such as a tuition fee or maintenance loan, you should fill in a 'short' DSA1 form.

You will need to send Student Finance England proof of your Disability or condition.

Once Student Finance England have approved you are eligible for DSA, you will need Documentary evidence and a 'needs assessment' are required to identify your support needs relating to your course. The assessment must be carried out at an Independent Assessment Centre or the Disability coordinator may be able to arrange to do this at the University.

When Should I Apply?

It is advisable to start the application process as soon as possible before beginning your course, as the application process can take up to four months to complete.

For more information please visit: <https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas/overview>

Can I Claim Benefits?

Most full-time students are not entitled to benefits; however, if you are a disabled student you may be able to get Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and/or Housing Benefit. You will not get Housing Benefit for living in University Accommodation. To be entitled for both these forms of support you must qualify for a disability premium or if you have been incapable of work for a continuous period of at least 28 weeks - For More Information visit: www.disabilityalliance.org/skillbenefits.htm

For information on benefits and tax credits for students with children see: 'Advice Direct...Students with Children'.

Other Sources of Funding

It may be helpful to you to read our other finance Advice Directs...

You may be entitled to apply to the following fund:

- *The Student Hardship Fund* - A university fund administered by the University to assist students who face financial hardship during their studies. For more information see 'Advice Direct... Student Hardship Fund'

To find out what other help may be available to you, it may be helpful to make use of the following:

- *The Charity Directory* - contains information about charities throughout England who are willing to donate funds to good causes, including students. This directory can be found at your local library.
- *EGAS (Educational Grants Advisory Service)* - an independent advice agency that can assist students, who are not eligible for statutory funding, to find other sources of assistance. www.egas-online.org.uk

Undergraduate funding database provided by the university –
<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/undergraduate/funding/index.aspx>

Postgraduate funding database provided by the university –
<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/postgraduate/funding/FundingFilter.aspx>
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Financial Problems

If you experience financial difficulties - you do have not enough money, or have an unexpected cost and are unable to pay for it, you should seek help as soon as possible (see below: 'Sources of Help').

It may be possible to sort out your problem through an assessment of your finances and careful budgeting with an Advisor. You may be able to delay any payments that you have until you have the finances available. In certain cases there may be sources of funding that you can apply for (see above: 'Other Sources of Funding'). You should also inform your personal tutor of your difficulties as they may be affecting your academic performance.

Sources of Help

Guild Advice, Guild of Students

Email: thearc@guild.bham.ac.uk

Visit the website at: <http://www.guildofstudents.com/support/thearc/>

Guild Advice Opening Hours (Term Time)*

Monday - Friday

Drop In Clinics

Saturday & Sunday

10am — 4pm

12-2pm

CLOSED

***Vacation Periods**

12 noon – 2pm

Disability Support through the University of Birmingham

<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/studentservices/projects/support/disability-support.aspx>

Disclaimer: The information on this leaflet only provides general guidance on financial support and the law. The leaflet should not be regarded or relied upon as a complete or authoritative statement of the law. Guild Advice will not accept any liability for any claims or inconvenience as a result of the use of information on this leaflet. If you think you have a legal problem you should seek further advice.

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