

PART-TIME FEE GRANT (PTFG) NOTES 2017-2018

Who should use these notes?

You should use these notes to fill in the PTFG application if you are:

- taking a course that starts between 1 August 2017 and 31 July 2018; and
- studying a part-time higher education course at levels 7-10 of the Scottish Credit Qualifications Framework (SCQF), this includes PGDEs, SVQ3, SVQ4 or other courses of professional development; and
- completing between 30-119 SCQF credits (120 for eligible university courses which are not campus based) each academic year; and
- not receiving support from any other government scheme such as ILA Scotland, Modern Apprenticeship Scheme, Construction Industry Training Board CITB, Employability Fund, Scottish Electrical Charitable Training Trust SECTT or funding from us (SAAS) for full-time studies; and
- not receiving support from your college through their fee-waiver scheme.

You must apply to us as early as possible, as soon as you have a place on the course, to make sure that we pay your PTFG to your course provider. **Your application must be with SAAS no later than six months after your course starts.** If we receive your application later than six months after your course starts, we will reject your application.

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Contact Us

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Further information, advice and guidance

Copies of SAAS guidance notes and Part-time Fee Grant (PTFG) forms can be found on our website at - http://www.saas.gov.uk/forms_and_guides/part_time.htm

What financial support is available?

If you and your course are eligible for support, you can apply for the PTFG to assist with the cost of your tuition fees in session 2017-2018.

The level of tuition fee we pay will be pro-rata based on the number of SCQF credits you are doing. We will scale this down based on the maximum fee levels we award to full-time students. The maximum PTFG we can award will be:

- £1,805 for publicly funded degree level courses
- £1,820 for 120 credit degree level courses at universities for non-campus based study
- £1,274 for publicly funded courses below degree level
- £1,195 for all courses at private providers

We will pay the PTFG straight to your college, university or private provider.

If the cost of your tuition fees is greater than the amount we award you, you will need to make your own arrangements to cover the shortfall.

You may still be entitled to tuition fees if you are repeating any period of study and undertaking 30-119 SCQF credits (120 for an eligible university course which is not campus based) of an eligible course, however you must be **registered** as a part-time student with your college or university **and** must be **studying** on a part-time basis.

There is no support available from us to help with your living or travel costs while you are on your course.

If you have a disability or learning difficulty, you may be eligible to claim for certain extra expenses that arise because you are on an eligible course of Higher Education. This is known as the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) and is available to part-time students in receipt of the PTFG who are undertaking at least 50% of the length of the full time course. This normally only applies to students undertaking courses such as degrees, HND's and HNC's at colleges and universities. You can find more information on the type of funding available and the DSA application process from the 'forms and guides' section of our website.

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Applying for support

Please read these notes carefully before you fill in your application. They will explain what support you can apply for and will help you fill in your application form.

You must apply to us as early as possible, as soon as you have a place on your course, to make sure we pay your fees to your course provider on time. Your application for support must be with us **no later than six months after your course starts**. If we receive your application later than six months after your course starts, we will reject your application. **You must make a separate application for each year of your course.**

We can only accept one application each academic year. Please include all the modules you intend to study between 1 August 2017 and 31 July 2018.

Give us all the details we ask for. Make sure that you sign the declaration and undertaking at the end of Section **F**. If you do not fill in the form correctly, we will not be able to process your application. This may mean that your university/college/training provider will not receive payment of your tuition fees on time.

You must tell us if there is any change in your circumstances that may affect the amount of money we pay on your behalf. **If you withdraw from your course we may not pay your tuition fees.**

We aim to process correctly filled-in applications within 28 days of us receiving them. We will assess your entitlement and send you an award notice. This will tell you how much support you will get. **If you have not heard from us within 28 days of sending your application, please contact us.**

Filling in the application form

Section A - your personal details

A1-A2 This is your reference number. Please give us this if you call as it will help us to find your details quicker. If you are applying for the first time, you will not have a reference number. We will send you one when we process your application.

A3 You must let us know if you are already receiving funding from any other government training scheme; this includes ILA Scotland, Employability Fund, Community Jobs Scotland programme, Construction Industry Training Board (CITB), Scottish Electrical Charitable Training Trust SECTT and the Modern Apprenticeship Scheme.

You must let us know if you are already receiving ILA (SDS Individual Learning Account) support or funding from us for a full-time course of study. You are not eligible for a PTFG, if your course start date falls into the period when your ILA account is open, if used.

The PTFG is **NOT** available to you if you are already receiving government support for a training scheme or course of study.

If you receive any financial help towards your tuition fees from another source, such as your employer, please tell us the amount. If your course provider is already funding you from the fee-waiver scheme, you are not eligible for the PTFG.

A4-A10 Please give us your personal details.

A11-A13 Please give us your full home address. You must write to us if your address changes after you have applied for funding.

A14-A15 Please give us a phone number and an email address (if you have one) that we can contact you on. It is important you let us know if these change after you have applied for funding.

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Section B - your residence eligibility

You must fill in this section if you are applying for a PTFG for the first time or you applying to us after a break in study of one year or more.

B1-B3 Please give us your personal details.

B4 The relevant date depends on when your course starts. The dates for session 2017-2018 are as follows:

- 1 August 2017 for courses that start between 1 August 2017 and 31 December 2017
- 1 January 2018 for courses that start between 1 January 2018 and 31 March 2018
- 1 April 2018 for courses that start between 1 April 2018 and 30 June 2018
- 1 July 2018 for courses that start between 1 July 2018 and 31 July 2018

B5-B11 To meet the residence conditions, you must have been ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man for the three years immediately before the relevant date. If you are not a UK or other EU national, you must be settled in the UK (as set out in the Immigration Act 1971) on the relevant date.

You must also be ordinarily resident in Scotland on the relevant date given in **B4**.

If you have answered 'No' to question B.8, please complete the AB10G form which you can download from our website.

We will not normally treat you as being ordinarily resident in the UK and Scotland if your main purpose in coming here is to receive education.

We do not need a passport if you are a UK National.

If you are an EU (non UK) national you must send us a clear photocopy of the photo page of your passport or a photocopy of your EEA national identity card.

If you are not a UK national or a national of another EU member state, you must send us a clear photocopy of any documents you have from the Home Office that confirms your immigration or asylum status in the UK. Please send clear photocopies as we destroy all documents after 30 days.

You can get more information about settled status from the Home Office. Visit their website at www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk or phone their helpline on 0870 6067 766.

Eligibility at the beginning of a course of education determines eligibility for the duration of that course of education. This means if you start a course of education while ineligible to receive support on residence grounds, you will continue to be ineligible to receive support on residence grounds for the rest of that course of education.

[Annex A](#) gives further residency information about the categories of students who may still be eligible for support even though they do not meet our general residence conditions.

Section C - your institution and course details

- C1** Fill in the details of where you are studying
- C2** You must give us the full title of your course and the qualification level, for example, HND, SVQ4 at Level 8, SVQ3 at Level 7, BSc.
- C3-C4** You must tell us which year of the course you will be studying in session 2017-2018 and when you expect to complete the course.
- C5** Please enter the number of years it will take to complete your course.
- C6** This only applies to non-UK EU nationals. If you have come to Scotland specifically to undertake this course, you must be planning to graduate from the course before we can consider funding.

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Section D - your income

- D1-D2** You will only be eligible for a PTFG if your average annual **gross** income is £25,000 a year or less.

You must give us evidence of your income. Please send us clear photocopies as we destroy all original documents after 30 days.

Evidence of income from employment

If you are in employment, please give us one of the following documents:

- if you are paid monthly, 4 weekly or 2 weekly, your **three most recent payslips**
- if you are paid weekly, three payslips you have **received in the last three months**
- a letter from your employer confirming your monthly or weekly gross salary for each of the last 3 months. Please make sure that pay dates are clearly stated on the letter.
- Our 'Certification of income' form, which you can download from our website www.saas.gov.uk

We will not accept a P60 or a letter from your employer confirming your annual salary, as proof of income.

If you started new employment within the last three months and cannot give us three payslips, please send us a copy of your job offer letter or contract of employment showing the start date and confirmation of your new salary. We can also accept a letter from your employer on their headed paper confirming the start date and details of your salary.

Evidence of income from self-employment

If you are self-employed, please give us one of the following documents:

- a copy of your latest tax return/self-assessment tax calculation
- a letter on company headed paper from your accountant or a copy of your accounts
- our 'Certification of self-employment' form which you can download from our website www.saas.gov.uk

If you have been self-employed for less than 1 year and cannot give us any of the above, we can accept one of the following documents:

- a letter on company headed paper from you or your accountant confirming your company's taxable income over the last 3 months
- a copy of a letter from HMRC or Company's House confirming your self-employed status

Property

If you have income from property, please send us one of the following documents:

- a letter from you or your accountant confirming your property income over the last 3 months
- a copy of a letter from HMRC confirming you receive income from property

If you have been receiving income from property for less than a year, please send in one of the following documents:

- a letter from your letting agent confirming your property income over the last 3 months
- a photocopy of a bank statement which clearly shows income from renting
- a photocopy of a tenancy agreement

Evidence of income from pensions

If you receive a **state pension**, please give us one of the following documents:

- a letter from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) confirming your current pension amount
- a copy of your most recent bank statement showing payment reference 'DWP-SP'
- a copy of your most recent pension statement, from the current tax year showing payment reference 'DWP-SP'.

If you receive a **private/work pension**, please give us one of the following documents:

- a copy of your most recent pension statement
- the most recent P60 for each pension you receive. We do not accept bank statements as proof of private/work pensions.

Benefits

Please give us the amount of any replacement living-cost benefits or tax credits listed below:

- Bereavement Allowance
- Carers Allowance
- Employment Support Allowance (ESA)
- Income Support
- Incapacity Benefit
- Industrial Death Benefit
- Industrial Injuries Benefit
- Invalid Care Allowance
- Invalidity Benefit/Allowance
- Job Seekers Allowance (contribution and income based)
- Lower standard of occupation allowance
- Maternity Allowance
- Pension credit
- Retirement Pension
- Severe Disablement Allowance
- Statutory Sick Pay
- Statutory Maternity Pay
- Universal Credit (exclude the housing and childcare element)
- Widowed Parents' Allowance
- War Widow's Pension
- War Disablement Pension
- War Pension
- Working Tax Credits (excluding the Child Tax Credit amount)

If you are in receipt of any of these benefits: please give us one of the following documents:

- a benefit entitlement letter dated within the last 3 months which clearly states the amount and frequency of payment
- our 'Confirmation of benefit form' which you can download from our website www.saas.gov.uk.
- a copy of your most recent bank statement showing payment reference 'DWP' which has at least two payments of each benefit received. This must clearly show the amount and frequency of benefit payments.

If you are in receipt of Working Tax Credits, please send us all pages of your most recent Tax Credit Award notice.

Evidence of nil income

If you do not have any income, you should cross (x) in the box found in section D2. You will also need to download and print the 'confirmation of nil income' form and send this to us with your application. You can download this form from the 'Forms and guides' section of our website at www.saas.gov.uk.

We may ask for documentary evidence to confirm this later in the year.

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Section E – Training provider endorsement

E1-E5 This section must be filled in by your course provider. They will need to confirm that your course is eligible for funding, the number of SCQF credits you are doing and that you are studying at the required level, leading to an eligible course.

Make sure that they sign, date and stamp the form and fill in the course start date, the number of SCQF credits and the fee amount sections before you send it back to us. If they do not fill in this section, we will have to send the form back to you.

We must receive your application form no later than six months after the start date of your course. It is therefore important you fill in the form and pass it to your course provider as soon as possible.

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Section F – Declaration and undertaking

Please read the declaration carefully. When you are happy that you have filled in your form correctly, you should sign and date the declaration. If you do not do this, we will have to send your form back to you which will delay the processing of your application.

Section G – Checklist

Please read the checklist on the application and make sure you give us all of the documents that we have asked for. If you don't this will delay the processing of your application.

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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

When can I apply?

You will be able to download an application from our website www.saas.gov.uk from April 2017. You must have a place on your course before you can send an application form to us.

What is the closing date for the PTFG in session 2017-2018?

The academic session runs from 1 August 2017 to 31 July 2018. Your closing date is six months after your course starts. Your course start date is the actual day that you start your course not the first day of the academic year.

If we receive your application form **after the closing date**, we will not be able to award you the PTFG and you will have to pay your own tuition fees.

What proof of income do I need to supply?

Please see [section D](#) of these notes.

What if I can't give you proof of my income?

Please see [section D](#) of these notes. If you have no income please see the [Nil income](#) section of these notes.

When will I get notification of my award?

It can take us up to 28 days to process a correctly completed application. You will receive a letter of award by post to the address provided on your application form within 28 days of us receiving your correctly completed application form. If you have not heard from us after 28 days, please [contact us](#).

What do I do with my letter of award once I receive it?

You must show it to your college, university or private provider as it is confirmation of the level of tuition fee support that we will be paying to them on your behalf.

When will you pay my fees?

We have 3 payment dates*:

- For courses starting between August and December 2017, we will pay the fees in January 2018.
- For courses starting between January and March 2018, we will pay fees in April 2018.
- For courses starting between April and July 2018, we will pay fees in July 2018.

Payment runs are January, March and June then September for the mop up.

What happens if my application gets lost in the post?

Please send us another application and supporting documents as soon as possible. You should also send us any proof of postage for your first application and a covering letter telling us when you sent us your first application.

What happens if I send in a late application?

If we receive your application after the closing date, we will not be able to award you the PTFG. In these circumstances you should contact your college, university or private provider for advice.

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What do I do if I do not qualify for the PTFG?

You will have to make arrangements to pay your own tuition fees. Please contact your college, university or private provider for further advice.

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What do I do if my income is over the threshold of £25,000?

You will have to make arrangements to pay your own tuition fees. Please contact your college, university or private provider for further advice.

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ANNEX A

GENERAL RESIDENCY INFORMATION

If you do not meet our general residency conditions, you may still be eligible for support in certain circumstances. Support may be available to:

- UK nationals who were born in and have spent the greater part of their life in the UK.
- UK nationals and family members of such nationals who have returned to the UK to live or study who currently live or have lived in another EU member state, the European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland.
- UK nationals returning from temporary employment or study outside the UK.
- EU nationals and family members of such.
- Nationals of the EEA and Switzerland, who have been granted permanent residence in the UK and their husbands, wives or civil partners and children or stepchildren.
- Nationals and family members of nationals of other EU member states, the EEA and Switzerland who have EEA migrant worker/self-employed or Swiss employed/self-employed status in the UK.
- Nationals and family members of nationals of other EU member states, the EEA and Switzerland, who have EEA frontier worker/self-employed or Swiss frontier employed/self-employed status in the UK.
- People recognised as refugees by the British Government, and their husbands, wives or civil partners and children or stepchildren.
- People who have been granted exceptional leave to enter or remain, humanitarian protection or discretionary leave in the UK, as a result of an asylum claim, and their husbands, wives or civil partners and children or stepchildren.
- Syrian nationals who entered the UK through the Syrian Persons Vulnerable Relocation Scheme (VPRS).
- Iraqi nationals who have been given leave to enter the UK under the Iraqi Direct Entry Scheme (also know as the Locally Engaged Staff Assistance Scheme (LESAS)).
- Anyone who is under 18 and has been granted temporary protection in the UK.
- Anyone who is the dependant child of a Swiss national.
- Anyone who is the dependant child of a Turkish worker.

For more information on the above please see the residency section of our website at www.saas.gov.uk

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**OPERATING RULES FOR THE
PART-TIME FEE GRANT
2017-2018**

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Contact Us

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Broomhouse Drive
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EH11 3UT

Website: www.saas.gov.uk

Email: SAAS_PTFG@gov.scot

Further information, advice and guidance

Information for Students – Copies of SAAS guidance notes and Part-time Fee Grant (PTFG) forms can be found on our website at - http://www.saas.gov.uk/forms_and_guides/part_time.htm

Introduction

This document is a guide to the Part-Time Fee Grant (PTFG) operating rules for approved training providers delivering eligible courses that commence between 1 August 2017 and 31 July 2018. These rules are available on the secure HEI Staff Area of our website.

The Students' Allowances (Scotland) Regulations 2007 (as amended) provide the legislative basis for the PTFG.

Please direct any queries on the content of this guidance to the SAAS policy team at SAASPolicy@gov.scot.

Student eligibility - income

Students must have an annual gross income of **£25,000** or less per year.

Student eligibility – age

PTFG is not available to anyone in full-time compulsory education. This normally applies to U16's. However, 15 year olds can leave school before their 16th birthday if their birthday falls between summer and 1st October – this group can apply for the PTFG.

Student eligibility - residency

To qualify for support with tuition fees, students must meet our residence eligibility conditions. We base our residence eligibility conditions on the student's circumstances on the first day of the first academic year of the course (the relevant date). We will decide whether students meet our residence eligibility conditions.

Relevant date - the relevant date depends on when a course starts. The dates for session 2017-2018 are as follows:

- **1 August 2017** for courses that start between 1 August 2017 and 31 December 2017.
- **1 January 2018** for courses that start between 1 January 2018 and 31 March 2018.
- **1 April 2018** for courses that start between 1 April 2018 and 30 June 2018.
- **1 July 2018** for courses that start between 1 July 2018 and 31 July 2018.

To meet the residence conditions, students must have been ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man for the three years immediately before the relevant date. If they are not a UK or other EU national, they must also be settled in the UK (as set out in the Immigration Act 1971) on the relevant date. To find out about getting settled status, students can visit the Home Office website at www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk or phone their helpline on 0870 6067 766.

Students must also be ordinarily resident in Scotland on the relevant date.

We will not normally treat students as being ordinarily resident in the UK and Scotland if their main purpose in coming here has been to receive education and that they would have otherwise been living elsewhere.

Eligibility at the beginning of a course of education determines eligibility for the duration of that course of education. This means, if a student starts a course of education while ineligible to

receive support on residence grounds, they will continue to be ineligible to receive support on residence grounds for the rest of that course of education.

Students who do not meet the general residence conditions

Such students **may** still be eligible for PTFG support in certain circumstances. Support may be available to:

- UK nationals who were born in and have spent the greater part of their life in the UK.
- UK nationals and family members of such nationals who have returned to the UK to live or study who currently live or have lived in another EU member state, the European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland.
- UK nationals returning from temporary employment or study outside the UK.
- EU nationals (other than UK nationals) and family members of such.
- Nationals of the EEA and Switzerland, who have **permanent residence** in the UK and their husbands, wives or civil partners and children or stepchildren.
- Nationals and family members of nationals of other EU member states, the EEA and Switzerland who have **EEA migrant worker/self-employed or Swiss employed/self-employed** status in the UK.
- Nationals and family members of nationals of other EU member states, the EEA and Switzerland, who have EEA **frontier worker/self-employed or Swiss frontier employed/self-employed** status in the UK.
- People recognised as **refugees** by the British Government, and their husbands, wives or civil partners and children or stepchildren.
- People who have **humanitarian protection or discretionary leave** in the UK, and their husbands, wives or civil partners and children or stepchildren.
- Syrian nationals who entered the UK through the Syrian Persons Vulnerable Relocation Scheme (VPRS).
- Iraqi nationals who have leave to enter the UK under the Iraqi Direct Entry Scheme (also know as the Locally Engaged Staff Assistance Scheme (LESAS)).
- Anyone who is under 18 and has **temporary protection** in the UK.
- Anyone who is the dependant child of a Swiss national.
- Anyone who is the dependant child of a Turkish worker.

EU and EU overseas territories nationals and family members of such

Students may qualify for support for the PTFG if they meet all of the following conditions:

- They are an EU national (other than a person who is a United Kingdom national who has not exercised a right of residence) or an EU overseas territories national, or a family member of either, accompanying or joining their family member in the UK.
- They have been ordinarily resident in a member state of the EEA and Switzerland or the EU overseas territories for the three years immediately before the relevant date. If they are claiming support as the family member of an EU or EU overseas territories national, they don't have to meet this requirement if their family member does.
- They are taking a course of part-time study in Scotland and plan to graduate in Scotland*.

* We will not pay the PTFG if they are studying in Scotland as part of their course at their home training provider to which they will transfer credits, return to and graduate from.

Course eligibility

Eligible courses include:

- part-time Higher Education courses (including PGDE)
- SVQ3 and SVQ4
- Professional Development Awards (PDA)
- Continuing Professional Development courses (CPD) at levels 7-10 of the [Scottish Qualifications Framework](#) (SCQF) and complete at least 30-119 SCQF credits per year
- Some 120 credit full-time courses (please contact SAAS_PTFG@gov.scot for further advice) at universities for non-campus based study can exceptionally be considered.

Eligible courses must be at least 4 months long in each academic year.

Eligible courses must be within the approved credit range. If a course was for example, 140 credits per year, we will not fund 119 credits worth – that course is deemed ineligible for PTFG.

Distance learning without tutor support and monitoring is not eligible for PTFG.

Publicly funded colleges and existing approved private organisations must let us know each year about any new courses they are proposing to deliver part-time that may be eligible for a fee grant. As is the case for full-time study, we must make sure that the appropriate qualification body, for example, the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) fully validates and approves the course before we can offer support from public funds.

Any new private organisation wishing to claim the PTFG will need to contact us for further information on how the SQA validate and approve their courses.

Only students at Scottish training providers are eligible to claim PTFG support.

Application process

Any student wishing to apply for a course commencing on or after 1 August 2017, should download a 2017-2018 application from our website. The forms will be available in May 2017. The 2016-2017 form is only for courses commencing between 1 August 2016 and 31 July 2017.

Training providers must endorse, date and stamp the applications to confirm both the student and course are eligible. Colleges must consider whether a student is eligible for Fee Waiver support rather than the PTFG. Students must not receive fee waiver and PTFG support at the same time. **We will accept Business Card or Company Headed Paper if a stamp is not available.**

An application only counts towards a year of the course. Students must apply annually and submit a new application for each year of study. **Applications must be with SAAS no later than six months after a course starts. For example, if a course starts on 19 August 2017 then the application must be with SAAS by 19 February 2018.**

Students are advised to contact us if they have not heard from us within 28 days of sending their application form.

Previous study

Students will still be able to apply for PTFG even if they have received funding for a previous qualification.

Support from other funding schemes

Students are not eligible to receive full-time support at the same time as receiving the PTFG. Students are not eligible to receive PTFG support at the same time as receiving Individual Learning Account (ILA) funding. Students must wait until completing their PTFG course before applying for ILA support.

Students who are registered full-time but attending on a part-time basis cannot use PTFG to help with tuition fee costs.

Students receiving support from other government training schemes such as Employability Fund, the Community Jobs Scotland programme, the Modern Apprenticeship Scheme, Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) and Scottish Electrical Charitable Training Trust (SECTT) are not eligible for PTFG funding at the same time.

Payment of third party contributions

Training providers should enter the total fee they are charging the student at section E3 on the application form.

The student must declare on the form at section C6, any third party help they are receiving. We will deduct this from the cost of the course. Some examples are below.

Example 1 – Student A is undertaking 90 credits of a degree course at a university who is charging them tuition fees of £1500 for the academic year 2017-2018.

SAAS maximum PTFG award = $90 \text{ credits} / 120 \text{ credits} \times £1820 \text{ (full-time fee level)} = \text{£1365}$

Student is receiving £800 towards the cost of their fees from their employer.

In this example, the PTFG award is £700 (1500-800).

Example 2 – Student E is undertaking 78 credits of an SVQ4 course at a private training provider who is charging tuition fees of £1300 for the academic year 2017-2018.

SAAS maximum PTFG award= 78 credits/120 credits x £1205 (full-time fee level) = **£783**.

Student is receiving £200 towards the cost of their fees from their employer.

In this example, the PTFG award is £783. Student has a shortfall of £317 (1300-783-200)

Fee grant amounts

The level of tuition fee will be pro-rata on the number of SCQF credits the student takes. We will scale this down based on the maximum fee levels we award for full-time students, using 120 credits as the benchmark. The maximum PTFG we can award is:

- £1,805 for publicly funded degree level courses (£1,820 for eligible 120 credit courses at universities for non-campus based study);
- £1,274 for publicly funded courses below degree level; and
- £1,195 for all courses at private training providers.

The existing tuition fee cut-off arrangements will remain. The level of fee payable will be dependent on the number of credits the student was undertaking at the tuition fee cut-off date (1 December for Autumn start courses). Students who increase or decrease their credits after their initial application will not get a revised fee amount from us.

EXAMPLES

Example 1 – Student A is undertaking 90 credits of a degree course at a university who is charging them tuition fees of £1500 for the academic year 2017-2018.

SAAS maximum PTFG award= 90 credits/120 credits x £1820 (full-time fee level) = **£1365**

In this example, the PTFG award is £1365 so the student would need to make alternative arrangements to find the remaining £135.

Example 2 – Student B is undertaking 60 credits of a degree course at a university who is charging them tuition fees of £700 for the academic year 2017-2018.

SAAS maximum PTFG award= 60 credits/120 credits x £1820 (full-time fee level) = **£910**.

In this example, the PTFG award is £700, although we could offer support up to £910, but as the university are charging less then we can pay, we will pay the lesser amount of £700.

Example 3 – Student C is undertaking 30 credits of an HNC course at a college who is charging them tuition fees of £321 for the academic year 2017-2018.

SAAS maximum PTFG award= 30 credits/120 credits x £1285 (full-time fee level) = **£321**

In this example, the PTFG award is £321, which is the exact fee the college are charging.

Example 4 – Student D is undertaking 48 credits of an HNC course at a college who is charging them tuition fees of £500 for the academic year 2017-2018.

SAAS maximum PTFG award= 48 credits/120 credits x £1285 (full-time fee level) = **£514**

In this example, the PTFG award is £500, although we could offer support up to £514, but as the college is charging less than we can pay, we will pay the lesser amount of £500.

Example 5 – Student E is undertaking 78 credits of an SVQ4 course at college and is being charged tuition fees of £950 for the academic year 2017-2018.

SAAS maximum PTFG award= 78 credits/120 credits x £1285 (full-time fee level) = **£835**.

In this example, the PTFG award is £835, so the student would need to make alternative arrangements to find the remaining £115.

Example 6 – Student F is undertaking 46 credits of a PDA award at a private training provider and is being charged tuition fees of £490 for the academic year 2017-2018.

SAAS maximum PTFG award= 46 credits/120 credits x £1205 (full-time fee level) = **£462**

In this example, the PTFG award is £462, so the student would need to make alternative arrangements to find the remaining £28.

Example 7 – Student G is undertaking 100 credits of an SVQ4 at a private training provider and is being charged tuition fees of £920 for the academic year 2017-2018.

SAAS maximum PTFG award= 100 credits/120 credits x £1205 (full-time fee level) = **£1004**.

In this example, the PTFG award is £920, although we could offer support up to £1004, but as the training provider is charging less than we can pay, we will pay the lesser amount of £920.

You can also use our PTFG fee calculator, which can be found on our website, to work out how much fee grant we will pay.

Withdrawals

Training providers must inform us of any student withdrawals and provide withdrawal dates. You must let us know of students who enrol but never attend or commence the course. You must not make a claim for these learners. We will treat any students who drop below the eligible number of credits as a withdrawal and you must let us know the date their programme of study fell below the 30 credit level.

PTFG awards will be based on the number of credits studied on the tuition fee cut-off dates. Any fluctuations after that date will not result in adjusted PTFG amounts from SAAS.

Transferring

Students who decide to study full-time after initially commencing on a part-time basis may be able to apply to us for full-time support. We can only consider this where we have not already paid a PTFG to a training provider.

Each academic year runs from 1 August to 31 July. We can only make one tuition fee payment per student per academic year.

Payment processes

When we receive the completed endorsed application form, we will, following successful completion of the processing, arrange payment to the training provider. We will make the payment in the next fee run after the course start date provided the endorsed application meets the rules of eligibility. We will pay this on the same frequency as for full-time tuition fee support and we will record this separately. We will issue a PTFG payment report once we have run the payments.

Where the student leaves the course before the payment cut off date, it is at the discretion of the training provider if they wish to claim a proportion/all of the fees directly from the student in relation to the period of learning undertaken.

Payment cut-off dates for 2017-2018 are as follows:

- **1 December 2017** for courses starting between 1 August 2017 and 31 December 2018.
- **1 March 2018** for courses starting between 1 January 2018 and 31 March 2018.
- **1 June 2018** for courses starting between 1 April 2018 and 30 June 2018.
- **1 July 2018** for courses starting between 1 July 2018 and 31 July 2018.

Compliance monitoring

Compliance monitoring consists of actions to:

- Determine training provider compliance with scheme rules,
- Determine whether evidence of imminent or actual inappropriate and/or fraudulent activities may exist

The process of compliance monitoring may consist of:

- **Investigations** we may do this when we suspect a training provider is failing to operate within scheme rules.

Scottish Ministers can remove designations from training providers if they are satisfied there are inappropriate and/or fraudulent activities occurring.

Part-Time Fee Grant (PTFG)

Introduction

Students who are undertaking an undergraduate level course or a PGDE on a part-time or part-time distance learning basis may be eligible for payment of their tuition fees under the Part-time Fee Grant (PTFG). Part-time support is only available to students who are registered as 'part-time' by their college or university.

Important information This information relates to part-time undergraduate (and PGDE) students only, who are claiming tuition fee support. If you want information about the support available for part-time postgraduate students, not studying a PGDE, or students claiming DSA only, please see the appropriate section of the GIs for information.

[Change of course and withdrawals](#)

[Eligibility – course eligibility](#)

[Eligibility – student eligibility](#)

[EU Students](#)

[Personal income](#)

[Previous study](#)

[Support available](#)

Change of course and withdrawals

The tuition fee cut-off arrangements will apply as normal for part-time students i.e. we will pay fees for any student who is in attendance on the fee cut of date – see the tuition fee section of the GIs for more information on the tuition fee cut of dates.

Any students who drop below the eligible number of credits will be treated as a withdrawal and we will need to know the date their study programme became ineligible. If this happens before the fee cut-off date then these students may be eligible to apply for ILA200 instead.

Students who decide to study full-time after initially commencing on a part-time basis may be able to apply to us for full-time support. Tuition fees can only be considered for that academic year where no fee payment has been made to a college or university in respect of their part-time course.

If a student has been granted Medical Leave of Absence from their full-time course, they will not be considered eligible to receive the Part-time Fee Grant. This is because to be granted MLOA the university will have agreed to suspend a student's studies as they are medically unfit to study. They would therefore not be expected to continue on a part-time basis. They are also entitled to retain their support entitlement for full-time study.

If they are Registered With Attendance but not using their plus one to receive full support, they are not entitled to receive the Part-Time Fee Grant. This is because they are still entitled to receive full-time support in the form of the student loan.

If they withdrew before the fees cut-off date and received YSB and the loan up until their date of withdrawal, they are still entitled to receive the PTFG.

If a student changes course from one HEI to another in the same academic session we will pay fees to the HEI that they are attending on the fee cut of date.

Each academic year runs from 1 August to 31 July. We can only make one tuition fee payment per student per academic year.

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Eligibility – student eligibility

To be eligible for the PTFG all students must fulfil the following conditions

- Meet our residence conditions which are the same as those for full time study
- Be undertaking an [eligible course](#)
- Be studying between 30-119 credits in a session
- Be studying 120 credits in a session at the Open University or campus based university that offers courses on a distance learning basis (session 2014-2015 or later)*
- Have a personal income below £25,000
- Not be receiving support from any other government funding or training scheme ^
- Not be receiving support from the fee waiver scheme (if studying at college)
- Made their PTFG application within six months of the course start date

* Campus based universities who offer full-time distance learning courses may also be eligible for the PTFG. We will assess each course on an individual basis. You can find a list of campus based university distance learning courses that we currently fund at [G:\Saas\Staff Information\PTFG\PTFG - 120 credit courses](#). If your course is not on this list, please contact the [Policy team](#) for advice.

^ Such as ILA Scotland, Modern Apprenticeship Scheme (e.g. those funded by SECTT), Employability Fund or funding from SAAS for full-time studies.

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Eligibility – course eligibility

In order to be eligible for funding the course must be of higher education level or continuous professional development course between level 7 and 10 of the [Scottish Qualification Framework](#): There are two exceptions to this ruling, for the PGDE in education and the PG Diploma in Architecture which are above level SCQF 10. For the Diploma in Architecture the exception only applies if their undergraduate and postgraduate courses are ARB level 1 and 2. See the architecture file to confirm this. Students studying for this course on a part-time basis can apply for the PTFG.

Only courses undertaken at an HEI in Scotland are eligible for support. The PTFG is not available for students who are studying with an HEI that is based in the rest of the UK or abroad. However, if a student starts a course while domiciled in Scotland and subsequently moves to another part of the UK or EU/EEA or Switzerland or even outside the EU/EEA, we can continue to fund them as long as they remain registered with a Scottish HEI and do not have a break in study.

Eligible courses can include:

- Degrees
- HNDs
- Hank's
- SVQ3
- SVQ4
- Professional Development Awards
- Professional Qualifications
- Vocational Qualifications

NB This is not a complete list, if you have a student applying for a qualification not listed above or if they are on a course listed above and you are not sure if it is eligible for support please contact the [Policy team](#) for further advice.

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EU Student

EU students who meet our eligibility conditions, who are receiving living-cost support from their home EU country are still eligible to receive PTFG. This is because they will not be receiving fees from their home country.

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Personal Income

Students will only be eligible for the PTFG if their annual personal income is £25,000 a year or less.

Evidence required

[Benefits](#)

[Employed Income](#)

[Pension Income](#)

[Self-employed Income](#)

[Stipend](#)

Benefits

They should declare the amount of any replacement living-cost benefits or tax credits listed below:

- Age Allowance
- Bereavement Allowance
- Carers Allowance
- Disabled Tax Credit (DTC)
- Employment Support Allowance (ESA)
- Exceptional Disablement Allowance
- Income Support
- Incapacity Benefit
- Industrial Death Benefit
- Industrial Injuries Benefit
- Invalid Care Allowance
- Invalidity Benefit/Allowance
- Job Seekers Allowance (contribution and income based)
- Lower standard of occupation allowance
- Maternity Allowance
- Pension credit
- Retirement Pension
- Severe Disablement Allowance
- Severe Disablement Occupational Allowance
- Statutory Sick Pay
- Statutory Maternity Pay
- Un-employability Allowance
- Universal Credit

- Widowed Parents' Allowance
- War Widow's Pension
- War Disablement Pension
- War Pension
- Working Tax Credits (WTC)

If they are receiving any of these benefits they must provide us with one of the following documents:

- a benefit entitlement letter dated within the last 3 months
- their most recent Tax Credit Award Notice
- our 'Confirmation of benefit form' which you can download from our website www.saas.gov.uk
- a copy of their most recent bank statement showing payment reference 'DWP'

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Employed Income

If they have declared income from employment they should provide one of the following documents:

- if they are paid monthly, 4 weekly or 2 weekly, their three most recent payslips*
- if they are paid weekly, three payslips they have received in the last three months
- a letter from their employer confirming their monthly or weekly gross salary for the last 3 months
- Our 'Certification of income' form, which you can download from our website www.saas.gov.uk

If the amounts shown on their last 3 payslips are higher than normal due to temporary circumstances e.g. overtime or temporary promotion and does not reflect their normal monthly income, they will need to provide additional evidence.

We would request a letter from their employer confirming their normal annual income.

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Pension Income

If they are in receipt of a pension, they should provide one of the following documents:

- a letter from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) confirming their pension
- a copy of their bank statement showing payment reference 'DWP-SP'
- a copy of their most recent pension statement – if they receive a private or occupational pension
- a pension P60

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Self-employed Income

If they are self-employed, they should provide one of the following documents:

- a copy of their latest tax return/self assessment tax calculation
- a letter from their accountant or a copy of their accounts
- our 'Certification of self-employment' form which they can download from our website www.saas.gov.uk

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Stipend

A stipend is a form of salary, such as for an internship or apprenticeship. If the student receives such income, we will take this into account. We will accept wage slips or any other document that confirms their income.

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Previous study

Any previous study at undergraduate and postgraduate level does not affect the support someone can get for future study at postgraduate or undergraduate level.

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Support available

Tuition fees

Students are eligible for a tuition fee grant that reflects the number of credits they are studying and the level of course they are studying. This is calculated pro-rata and is based on the maximum fee levels we award for full-time students doing the same level of course. If the provider is charging them tuition fees that are higher than the amount we will pay, the student will have to pay the difference themselves.

The full-time fee rates for session 2016-2017 are:

- HNC/HND or equivalent level courses undertaken at a publicly funded HEI – £1,280
- Degree or equivalent level course undertaken at a publicly funded HEI – £1,820
- Courses undertaken at a privately funded HEI or learning provider – £1,205

Some Open University course at SCQF levels 7 and 8, which are below degree level, actually attract the higher tuition fee of £1,820. This only applies if the student is doing modules that form part of a degree course.

Example 1

Student A is undertaking 90 credits of a degree course at university and is being charged tuition fees of £1500 for the academic year 2016-2017.

SAAS maximum PTFG award = 90 credits/120 credits x £1820 (full-time fee level) = £1365

In this example, PTFG award is £1365 so the student would need to make alternative arrangements to find the remaining £135.

Example 2

Student B is undertaking 30 credits of an HND course at college and is being charged tuition fees of £321 for the academic year 2016-2017.

SAAS maximum PTFG award = 30 credits/120 credits x £1285 (full-time fee level) = £321

In this example, PTFG award is £321, which is the exact fee being charged.

Example 3

Student C is undertaking 46 credits of a PDA award at a private training provider who is charging tuition fees of £490 for the academic year 2016-2017.

*SAAS maximum PTFG award= 46 credits/120 credits x £1205 (full-time fee level) = **£462***

In this example, PTFG award is £462, so the student would need to make alternative arrangements to find the remaining £28.

Loan and Bursary

There is no support available.

Living-costs grants

Students studying part-time are not entitled to any living-costs grants apart from DSA. However, the eligibility criteria for DSA is different to the eligibility criteria for the PTFG and not everyone in receipt of the PTFG will be eligible to apply for DSA. Please see the eligibility section of the DSA GIs for more information.

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Notes for the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) application 2017-2018

If you would prefer, we can give you a version of these notes, as well as the DSA application forms, in the following formats:

- Braille
- Large print
- Audio

Student Awards Agency for Scotland
Saughton House
Broomhouse
Edinburgh
EH11 3UT

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Section 1 – about the Disabled Students' Allowance

Introduction

The Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) is a non-income assessed allowance to cover any extra costs or expenses you might have while studying, which arise because of your disability. You do not need to be claiming tuition fees and/or living-costs funding from us in order to claim DSA.

We have divided these notes into three sections. Section one gives you more information about what you can claim under DSA, section two explains how to apply for DSA and section three contains FAQs, contact details and other sources of helpful information.

Eligibility

To be eligible for DSA you must meet our eligibility criteria. More information about this can be found below.

Residence eligibility

Our residence eligibility conditions are set out in the Students' Allowances (Scotland) Regulations 2007 (as amended).

To meet our residence conditions, you must have been ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man for the three years immediately before the first day of the first academic year of your course (the relevant date) and ordinarily resident in Scotland on the relevant date. For the majority of students who start their course in the autumn term, the relevant date is 1 August. You must also be settled in the UK within the meaning of the Immigration Act 1971 on the relevant date.

If you do not meet the residence conditions set out above, you may still be eligible for funding in certain circumstances. Residency can be complicated; if you have any doubts about your eligibility, you should phone our helpline on 0300 555 0505 for advice. You can find further information about residency on our website at www.saas.gov.uk

Course eligibility

If you are on one of the following courses, providing you meet our residence eligibility conditions, you can apply for DSA:

- HNC
- HND
- Degree or equivalent level courses
- Foundation year of a degree course, providing you have enrolled for the whole course and not just the foundation year and the foundation year is a necessary and compulsory part of the course
- Diploma or degree in nursing or midwifery
- Full-time post graduate courses including PhDs (providing you are not eligible to receive DSA or equivalent support from another source)
- Part-time post graduate courses including PhDs (providing you are undertaking at least 50% of the length of the full-time course, and you are not eligible to receive DSA or equivalent funding from another source)

- Part-time undergraduate courses at HNC level or above (providing you are undertaking at least 50% of the length of the full-time course)
- Distance learning courses (providing you are undertaking at least 50% of the length of a full-time course)
- Open University courses (providing you are studying at least 60 credits in a year)

N.B. DSA can be considered even if your tuition fees are being paid via Student Funding Council, for an eligible course we support

If you meet one or more of the following, you will **not be entitled** to claim DSA funding:

- You are an EU student receiving a tuition fees only award
- Studying for less than 50% of the length of a full-time course
- On an Open University course and undertaking less than 60 credits
- Undertaking a course below HNC level
- Receiving funding from your Local Education Authority, Student Finance England, Student Finance Wales or Student Finance Northern Ireland
- You are receiving funding from a Research Council, the Social Work Department or any other UK publicly funded award-making body
- On a work-based learning course
- On an access course
- On an HNC, HND or degree level courses that we have not designated as eligible for funding
- Do not meet the residence requirements, as detailed above

If you are not entitled to funding from the DSA, you might still be eligible for funding from your college or university. You should speak to your Disability Advisor for advice.

The allowances

The DSA is made up of three parts:



1. The basic allowance



2. The large items allowance



3. The Non-Medical Personal Help allowance (NMPH)

1. Allowances – basic allowance

Basic allowance	
What is it for?	<p>This is a yearly allowance for consumable items such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excess photocopying or printing costs • Braille or Livescribe paper • Ink cartridges • Internet access
What is it not for?	<p>We do not pay for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptations to course hand outs • General stationery items, for example, pens and folders. • Phone line installation or rental • Internet installation
How much can I get?	<p>The rate for session 2017-2018 for full-time students is £1,725. For part-time students, the allowance is pro rata, for example, if you are studying for 50% of the length of a full-time course, you will be entitled to £863 (50% of the basic allowance).</p>

2. Allowances – large items allowance

Large items allowance	
What is it for?	<p>This allowance is available to all eligible students and covers the whole programme of your study. It can include the hire or purchase of items such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability related software (for example, dragon voice recognition software) • Other appropriate software (for example, Microsoft word) • Printers • Scanners • PCs or laptops • CCTV
What is it not for?	<p>We do not normally pay for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment that is not recommended by a validated needs assessor and approved by us. • Second hand/refurbished equipment • Phone line installation or rental • Any equipment that your college or university should be reasonably expected to provide • Equipment that all students on your course require, for example, cameras for students on photography courses or DVD players required by Open University students • Wheelchairs or mobility vehicles, such as scooters
How much can I get?	<p>The rate for session 2017-2018 is £5,160. We do not scale down this allowance for part-time students.</p>

3. Allowances – Non-Medical Personal Help (NMPH)

Non-Medical Personal Help (NMPH)	
What is it for?	<p>This is a yearly allowance for personal support such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readers • Sign Language Interpreters (SLI) • Note takers (including text help operators) • IT training • Study skills support • Mentors • Proof readers
What is it not for?	<p>We do not pay for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject specific tuition • Personal help that you require outside class time, for example, help with getting dressed in the morning • Any support that Social Services would normally provide • Any services such as counselling or study support that your college or university makes available to all its students • Disability related treatments, for example, Asfedic Tuning • NMPH during exams – your college or university will meet these costs
How much can I get?	<p>In 2017-2018, the rate for full-time students is £20,520. For part-time students, the allowance is pro rata, for example, if you are studying for 50% of the length of a full time course you will be entitled to £10,260 (50% of the NMPH allowance).</p>

More information about using a non-medical personal helper is available in our booklet [DSA NMPH allowance guide](#). You can download a copy of this from the 'forms and guides' section of our website at www.saas.gov.uk.

Travel

Only students who have extra travel costs because of their disability are eligible to apply for travel expenses.

If, as a result of your disability, you are not able to use any kind of public transport (including buses, coaches and trains), for example, if you have visual or mobility difficulties, we can consider paying a reasonable cost of travel by private car or taxi. We will need clear medical evidence confirming that your disability means that you are not able to use any kind of public transport before we can pay this.

If you apply for help with your travel costs and you travel by private car, you must provide us with the following:

- A letter from your doctor that confirms that as a direct result of your disability, you are unable to use public transport
- A written estimate **from you** which confirms the following:
 - The number of miles between your home and institution,

- The number of journeys that you make per week
- The number of weeks you are claiming for
- The cost of the journey per mile (MPG estimate)
- The cost of fuel per mile

The DSA Team will work out the cost of travel using the information above and will let you know how much you are entitled to. We will restrict any claims that we deem to be excessive.

We will not pay for:

- The cost of a car or equivalent vehicle if you do not already own one
- Insurance or MOT
- Driving lessons
- Repairs
- Any fines or parking tickets that you incur whilst travelling to your college or university

If you are unable to drive yourself and, instead, get help from a parent or partner, we can pay for the mileage rate for two return journeys between the home and college or university if your parent or partner returns home in between journeys.

We cannot pay travel by car under the DSA for disabled students who experience travel problems simply because they live in a rural location, have difficulty accessing public transport due to poor service in their area or who find it hard to pay for travel because of financial constraints.

If you are travelling by taxi, you may have to give us quotes from two different taxi companies estimating the cost of your journey each day.

We will normally only pay for one single return journey each day, between your home and college or university, during term time. However, we may pay for travel that is out with term time in certain circumstances, for example:

- If you have to attend your college or university to re-sit an exam
- If you have to come in to your college or university to meet with your course tutor

If this is the case, we need your Disability Advisor to confirm that you were required to attend your college or university outwith term time.

Please note, if you are a nursing student who is claiming travel expenses through DSA, you cannot also make a claim for travel expenses through the Nursing and Midwifery Student Bursary Scheme (NMSB).

Reasonable adjustments

The purpose of the DSA is to remove any disadvantages you may have when doing your course because of your disability. In other words, the DSA is there to help address any needs you have which arise from the inaccessible elements of your course, by providing specialist equipment and NMPH, where appropriate.

The Disability Equality Duty (DED), which came into force in December 2006, places a specific duty on colleges and universities to develop and implement a Disability Equality Scheme. The purpose of this scheme is to narrow the gap between the outcomes and experiences of disabled and non-disabled people. A college or university scheme should include an action plan,

arrangements for monitoring progress and an impact assessment. Colleges and universities will have a duty to report each year on the scheme's progress and to review it every three years. The process requires active engagement with and involvement of disabled people in its development and review.

Colleges and universities should continually anticipate the general requirements of disabled people with a wide range of impairments and health conditions rather than simply waiting until a disabled person requests an adjustment.

If we feel that any part of a DSA claim is something that we should consider as a 'reasonable adjustment' for a college or university, we may refuse that element of support. For example, if you need to use a specially adapted desk or chair while at college or university or you need course hand outs in a non-standard format.

Section 2 – How to apply for DSA

Introduction

Applications will be available to download from our website www.saas.gov.uk in April. Or, you can collect one from your college or university. To make sure your funding is available for you on the first day of your first term, you should apply as soon as possible, preferably before your course starts. **The closing date for applications is 31 March 2018.** Please make sure you apply before this date as we will not accept late applications.

What evidence do we need?

We will need the following four documents if you are applying for DSA:

- A DSA application form
- Evidence of your disability and details of the impact your disability has on your studies
- A needs assessment report
- A main student funding application (unless you are applying for DSA only) - apply online at www.saas.gov.uk

More information about each of these is on pages 7–9.

Filling in the DSA form

You should read the following carefully. If you need advice about applying or you are not sure what form to fill in, you should contact us or the Disability Advisor at your college or university for advice. Our contact details are on page 16. If you find it difficult to fill in your form, someone else may fill it in for you, if they have your authority to do so.

We have two different DSA application forms.

- One DSA form is for full-time students who are applying to us for tuition fees, bursary, loan or living-costs grants.
- One DSA form is for students who are part-time, distance learning or are studying full-time but are not applying to us for tuition fees, bursary, loan and living-costs grants.

You should fill in all sections of the form and your Disability Advisor should fill in the support details section.

When filling in the form you should make sure that:

- you fill in the form in CAPITAL letters using **black** ink
- **you give us details of a valid bank or building society account. You must give us your bank details even if you have already given them to us on your application for your main funding – We cannot process your DSA award without them**
- you sign and date the form and read the student consent section
- your assessor or Disability Advisor signs the form
- you send clear **photocopies** (please do not send originals) of important documents, such as your educational psychologist report
- if you are a part-time or distance-learning student, your college or university fills in the certificate of endorsement on page 6

If you do not do all of the above, it could delay processing your application.

DO NOT:

- Use highlighter pens as this shows up as blank text on our system
- Send original copies of documents such as your educational psychologists report. We destroy all documents after 30 days
- Use coloured ink as it does not always show up clearly on our system

Remember:

- Your application is only valid for one academic year of study. You must apply for DSA in each year of your course.
- Tell us if there is any change in your circumstances that might affect any award due to you. For example, if you decide to change your course or leave your course before you have finished it.

Diagnosis/medical evidence

In the first year that you apply for DSA, you must give us supporting documents to confirm your disability or learning difficulty (please send us photocopies and not originals). If your disability changes during your course and you need additional support as a result, you must also send us medical evidence. The type of evidence we require is below:

For dyslexia or specific learning difficulties, a statement or report from one of the following:

- An educational psychologist or appropriately qualified professional
- A letter from a previous educational establishment that you attended, such as a school or college, confirming that you have been diagnosed with dyslexia or a specific learning difficulty by an educational psychologist or appropriately qualified professional.

For other medical conditions, we need evidence which, along with the diagnosis, **clearly confirms the impact your disability has on your ability to study**. We can accept evidence from a qualified professional which includes:

- GP
- Nurse/psychiatric nurse
- Occupational therapist
- Physiotherapist
- Audiologist
- Hospital Consultant

Other forms of evidence:

- We can also accept evidence that you are in receipt of disability support or benefits from another agency such as the Department of Work and Pensions (providing you were required by them to undertake a diagnosis of your disability). For us to accept these documents as proof of your disability, they must state the nature of your disability and the date the original diagnosis was undertaken. A letter simply stating that you are in receipt of DLA or another disability related benefit is not sufficient.

The above is not a complete list. If you have evidence from a professional that we have not listed above or you are not sure if we will accept the evidence you have, you should contact us to check before you apply (see our contact details on page 16). It is not always necessary for the evidence you give us to be recent if the nature of your condition will not change. However, we reserve the right to ask you for evidence which confirms the current status of your condition if we feel this is necessary.

If you are applying for help with travel costs, you must also give us a letter from your doctor confirming that your disability does not allow you to use any kind of public transport.

Please note, if you need to have a needs assessment done, your assessor may ask you to give them additional evidence before they can do this. They will discuss this with you before your assessment.

Payment of diagnosis

We cannot pay for the cost of any diagnosis (including doctors' letters and educational psychologists' reports). However, your college or university may be able to help you meet the cost of such from their Discretionary Funds. You should contact them for advice.

Assessment of needs

A needs assessment is a report carried out by a qualified individual who lets us know the type of support and equipment you need to undertake your course.

All students applying for the DSA for the first time must have a needs assessment. Your institution may also request that a new needs assessment is necessary if:

- a significant period of time has passed since your original assessment took place;
- your disability or medical condition has changed
- you change course, or start a new course, and your needs change as a result of this.

It is not always necessary for a new assessment in the circumstances above and we may not agree to pay for a further assessment if we believe that an existing report is valid.

Many colleges and universities have trained staff who can carry out needs assessments on behalf of their own students. However, if there is no one at your college or university who can do this, we can refer you to an Access Centre near where you live or study.

We will pay for the cost of your needs assessment. We will not take this amount from your DSA allowance. If you have to travel for an assessment, you will have to pay such costs yourself. A list of all of the colleges, universities and Access Centres in Scotland that are validated to carry

out needs assessments for the purposes of DSA is available on our website at www.saas.gov.uk .

Please note that Access Centres will not normally give you an appointment for a needs assessment unless we have referred you to them.

If we need to refer you for a needs assessment, we will do so within three working days of receiving your application. The Access Centre will then contact you to arrange an appointment.

Your Access Centre or assessor will let you know if they need more information to carry out your needs assessment, for example, more detailed medical evidence.

Main funding application

If you are applying to us for tuition fee and/or living cost support, you must submit an application for your main student funding before or at the same time as you apply for DSA. We will not be able to process your DSA application until we have processed your application for your main funding.

You can fill out an application on-line at www.saas.gov.uk from April 2017. To make sure your living-costs funding is available for you on the first day of your first term, you should apply as soon as possible, but no later than the 30th June 2017. The closing date for applications is 31 March 2018 . Please make sure that you apply before this date, as we will not accept late applications.

You do not need to submit a main student funding application if you are applying for DSA only.

How we use the information that you give us

We are governed by the Data Protection Act 1998.

We will use the information you give us on your form to process your application for the DSA. We have a duty to protect the public funds we handle and we may use the information you have given on this form to prevent and detect fraud. We may also share this information for the same purpose with other organisations that handle public funds.

We need the information you give us to work out whether you are eligible for funding and we are the data controller for that information. We will assess your entitlement and send you a letter to tell you how much funding you will get from us. We keep your personal information so we can audit our assessment of student funding.

Where necessary, we will pass the information you give us on your DSA application form (and any other evidence you give us) to an Access Centre or to your college or university if they are approved to carry out needs assessments. They will use this to work out what equipment or help you need to do your course. They will send us a full report detailing your needs and how much it will cost.

Paying DSA

We will pay your main DSA award straight into your bank or building society. You must give us valid bank or building society details on your DSA application form, even if you have already given us bank details on your application for your main funding. We cannot make DSA payments by cash or cheque.

If you employ your own support worker, on receipt of a valid DSA claim for the support you received, we will pay you in arrears. You are responsible for then paying your helper. If you use a helper that your college, university or an agency provides, we will pay the helper direct. More information about how we pay for NMPH is available in our booklet DSA NMPH allowance guide. You can download a copy from our website www.saas.gov.uk.

Failure to purchase recommended equipment

You are expected to purchase the equipment which has been agreed with your assessor. If you are not happy with the recommendations made in your assessment you should contact your assessor to discuss this before purchasing any equipment, see the section – Appealing against a needs assessment on page 16 for more information.

Students may wish to upgrade some of the items recommended, particularly in the case of computer hardware. This is acceptable provided the assessor or their disability advisor approves the change. However, any associated costs must be borne by the student. Students are not permitted to use savings made through sourcing recommended items at a lower price to fund the upgrade of another piece of equipment.

If you choose to purchase equipment which has not been recommended by your assessor, we cannot cover this cost. This will mean we have paid you money you are not entitled to and will ask you to pay this back. Please see the ‘overpaid’ section below for more details.

Overpaid

We have a duty to protect the UK public funds we handle. In your application, we will ask you to agree to pay back any money we have paid you that you are no longer entitled to. We may ask you to do this if:

- your circumstances, as described in your application, change;
- you fail to meet the conditions of funding set out in the Students’ Allowances (Scotland) Regulations 2007 (as amended);
- Scottish Ministers decide to change the amount of your funding; or
- Scottish Ministers find that you should not have received funding.

If you receive money that you are not entitled to, we will instead ask you to set up a suitable repayment plan and make regular payments until you have paid us the full amount we have asked you to pay back.

You must tell us if there is any change in your circumstances which may affect any award due to you.

If you have been overpaid and would like to discuss payment options, please contact our DSA team on SAAS_4@gov.scot.

Fraud

You must send us copies of receipts for **all** items you purchase under the DSA. If you don't give us receipts or the amount on your receipts is less than the amount we awarded you, we will ask you to pay back the amount of money we gave you that is more than you are entitled to.

You must send us receipts for any items you purchase, using the large items allowance, within 6 weeks of making the purchase. You can send us receipts for any consumable items over the course of the year as you use it, or altogether at the end of the session.

If you have employed your helper direct, both you and your helper must sign all NMPH invoices. Again, if we pay you more than the NMPH award you are entitled to, we will ask you to pay this back.

If you apply for DSA in a subsequent year and you have not given us all of the receipts for your previous DSA award, we may withhold any further awards of DSA until we receive your receipts.

We take all aspects of fraud seriously and have a dedicated fraud team to deal with any cases that arise. We will aim to recover any money we pay, that we later find out, we have paid as the result of a fraudulent claim. We will prosecute anybody who makes a fraudulent claim for funding.

Processing times

We have the following response times and processing targets:

DSA forms

- Process all fully filled in DSA application forms within 21 calendar days
- Process all fully filled in needs assessment reports within 21 days

Written correspondence and emails

- Respond to all DSA written correspondence within 21 days
- Respond to all emails within 21 days
- Pay all invoices for NMPH within 21 days

Other

- Deal with any requests under Freedom of Information (FOI) within 20 working days
- Respond to all correspondence clearly marked 'complaint' within 14 days
- Respond to all correspondence clearly marked 'appeal' within 14 days

If you do not receive a reply from us within 28 calendar days, you should contact us to make sure we have received your application form or correspondence.

Our appeals and complaints procedures

How to make an appeal

An appeal is a formal request to review our decision and must allege an error on our part. We will only consider an appeal if it is based on us having made an incorrect assessment of factual circumstances and/or an erroneous interpretation of the law, and you support this with the relevant documentary evidence.

We will also accept appeals on extenuating or mitigating circumstances or events which we may consider to have a disadvantageous effect on your studies. You must support these requests with independent evidence such as a medical certificate.

SAAS has a two stage appeals process.

Stage one

A complaints and appeals officer will consider appeals and will aim to reply within 10 working days of receiving your appeal. If this is not possible, we will tell you when we will reply.

Stage two

Students can make a second stage appeal if they consider that we have not dealt with the matter satisfactorily. They must have evidence that they have not sent to us previously. Our Director of Policy and Engagement will sign off second stage appeals and their decision is final in terms of the Agency's procedures. We will reply to second stage appeals within 10 working days. If this is not possible, we will tell you when we will reply.

You can make an appeal in writing to:

Student Awards Agency Scotland
Complaints and Appeals Team
Saughton House
Broomhouse Drive
Edinburgh
EH11 3UT

Or by email to: SAASComplaints_Appeals@gov.scot

How to make a complaint

We are committed to providing a high-quality customer service. We want to know if something goes wrong or you are not satisfied with our service. A complaint may involve more than one service and you can make this about things like:

- delays in responding to enquiries and requests
- failure to provide a service
- a request for a service or information that we don't action
- our standard of service
- our policy
- treatment by or attitude of a member of staff
- our failure to follow proper administrative process

There are some things we can't deal with through our complaints handling procedure. These include:

- a routine first-time request for a service
- a request for information or an explanation of policy or practice
- disagreement with a decision where a right of appeal exists
- Freedom of Information or Data Protection requests decisions
- legal proceedings or judgements

You can complain in person, by phone, in writing or by email. Our contact details are below. Please clearly mark your letter or email 'Complaint'.

Student Awards Agency Scotland
Complaints and Appeals Team
Saughton House
Broomhouse Drive
Edinburgh
EH11 3UT

Email: SAASComplaints_Appeals@gov.scot

Telephone: 0300 555 0505

Normally, you must make your complaint within six months of the event you want to complain about or finding out that you have a reason to complain, but no longer than 12 months after the event itself. We may consider a complaint after the time limit in exceptional circumstances. Please tell us why the time limit should not apply to your complaint.

The [SAAS guide](#) to complaints describes our complaints procedure and how to make a complaint. It also tells you about our service standards and what you can expect from us.

Our complaints procedure has two stages:

Stage one - frontline resolution

We aim to resolve complaints quickly and whenever possible within the area that provided the service. This could mean an on-the-spot apology and explanation if something has clearly gone wrong and immediate action taken to resolve the issue.

We normally make our decision at stage one within five working days. We will contact you if we cannot make a decision in this time and agree an extension of time. If we can't resolve your complaint at this stage, we will explain why and tell you what you can do next. We might suggest that you take your complaint to stage two.

Stage two – investigation

Stage two deals with two types of complaint: those that we have not resolved at stage one and those that are complex and require detailed investigation. When using stage two we will:

- acknowledge receipt of your complaint within three working days
- where appropriate, discuss your complaint with you to understand why you are still not satisfied and what outcome you are looking for

- give you a full response to the complaint as soon as possible and within 20 working days

We will agree revised time limits if our investigation will take longer than 20 working days.

If you are still not satisfied with our decision after we have investigated your case, or the way we dealt with your complaint, you can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) to look at it.

The SPSO **cannot** normally look at:

- a complaint that has not been through our complaints procedure (so please make sure it has done so before you contact the SPSO)
- events that happened, or that you became aware of, more than a year ago
- a matter that the court has been or is considering

You can contact the SPSO:

In person:

SPSO
4 Melville Street
Edinburgh
EH3 7NS

By post:

SPSO
Freepost
EH641
Edinburgh
EH3 0BR

Freephone: 0800 377 7330

Online: www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us

Website: www.spsso.org.uk

Appealing the recommendations in your needs assessment

If you wish to appeal the recommendations in your needs assessment, you should contact the college, university or Access Centre that did your assessment. They will be able to give you a copy of their appeals process. If you are not happy with their response, we can appoint an Independent Arbitrator to look at your assessment, but only once you have exhausted your appeal with your college, university or Access Centre.

Section 1 – Frequently Asked Questions and contact details

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

How do I find out what equipment or other help I need?

We cannot offer advice about equipment or other types of help. If you need advice you should first contact the Disability Advisor at your college or university.

What happens once you have approved my claim for DSA?

We will send you a letter letting you know what we have agreed to pay for. We will also send a copy of this letter to the disability advisor at your institution and/or the Access Centre who carried out your assessment (provided you have given us your consent to do this on your application form).

Can I still apply for DSA even if I am near the end of my course?

Providing you apply before the application closing date, we will be able to consider your claim for DSA. However, the funding that we are able to offer you may be limited, for example we will not approve the hire or purchase of any equipment if you are able to borrow the items you need from your college or university. Also, we may not pay for any recommended equipment until the start of the next academic year.

Can I buy different items/equipment to the ones that you have approved?

No, you must buy the items/equipment exactly as your assessor recommends. If you are not happy with the equipment that they recommend for you, you should contact them to discuss this before you purchase any other items/equipment.

Can I buy equipment before my course begins?

Once we have dealt with your application, we will tell you what equipment we have approved. We may give you the money to buy your equipment shortly before the start of your course. We will only do this in certain cases. If you do not start/continue on your course, we will ask you to pay this money back to us.

We will not pay you for any equipment which you purchased prior to your needs assessment taking place. If you purchase any items which your assessor has recommended, but which we do not approve, you will have to pay for such items yourself.

What happens to the equipment when I finish my course?

All the equipment you buy with the DSA is and will stay your property. When you have finished with your equipment, you may decide to offer it to your college, university or a charity for other students to use, but you do not have to do so.

If we have paid for you to hire equipment, you will have to return this to the provider once the hire period is over.

Will I have to repay my DSA if I leave my course early?

Possibly. We may recover some or all of your DSA if you withdraw from your course. It will depend when you withdraw and whether we have given you money for support that you have not yet bought or received.

What do I do once I have bought all of my equipment?

You must send us receipts for any items of equipment we approve under the large items allowance within 6 weeks of purchasing them. If this is going to take you longer than 6 weeks, you must contact us to explain why. You can send us receipts for your consumable items, such

as ink cartridges, printer paper or photocopying credit throughout the academic session, or all together at the end of the academic session.

If the equipment you purchase costs less than the amount we have given you, you must send us a cheque or postal order made out to “Student Awards Agency for Scotland” for the amount you have not spent. **You cannot purchase items at a lower price and use the money you save to upgrade to another item**

If the price of your equipment changes after your assessment has taken place, please contact your disability advisor.

Please send us photocopies only of your receipts as you will need to keep the originals for warranty purposes.

If you apply for DSA in a subsequent year and you still have not given us all of the receipts for your previous DSA award, we may withhold any future award for DSA until we have received your receipts.

What happens if the amount of NMPH I need changes during the year?

You must contact your Disability Advisor as soon as possible to discuss this. Your Disability Advisor must tell us in writing of any possible changes. If we approve the changes, we will write to you to tell you.

We will not pay for more NMPH than the amount your Disability Advisor recommends. If you send us an invoice for more hours than were originally recommended for you, we will restrict the amount we pay to the number of hours that your Disability Advisor originally approved for you.

Who do I contact if I have any problems with my DSA?

If you have a problem with your assessment or the contents of your assessment report, you must contact the person who did your assessment.

If you have issues with your equipment or software, for example, your equipment breaks down or does not work correctly; you must contact your supplier direct. If you have a problem with your non-medical helper, for example, your helper always turns up late, if you employ them yourself, you must speak to them direct. If your agency or college or university provides your helper, you must speak to them.

If you have a problem with your DSA payments or you have any questions about the DSA scheme in general, you should contact us using the contact details on the next page.

Contact us

Telephone: 0300 555 0505
Address: The Student Awards Agency Scotland
DSA Team
Saughton House
Broomhouse
Edinburgh
EH11 3UT

Email: saas_4@gov.scot
Website: www.saas.gov.uk

Other useful contacts

Lead Scotland: Information and advice for disabled learners and carers

Princes House
5 Shandwick Place
Edinburgh
EH2 4RG

Tel: 0800 999 2568
Email: info@lead.org.uk
Website: www.lead.org.uk

Equality and Human Rights Commission

58 Robertson Street
Glasgow
G2 8DU

Tel: 0845 604 5510
Website: www.equalityhumanrights.com

National Union of Students Scotland

1 Papermill Wynd
McDonald Road
Edinburgh
EH7 4QL

Tel: 0131 556 6598
Email: mail@nus-Scotland.org.uk
Website: www.nus.org.uk

Disclaimer: *The information in this guide offers general guidance only and is not legally binding, nor does it constitute any right of eligibility for, or entitlement to, funding. We will assess each student's applicant on his or her individual circumstances in accordance with the information provided with his or her completed application form/s*

Disabled Students' Allowance

Introduction

The Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) is a non-income assessed allowance intended to cover any extra costs or expenses a student might incur while studying, which arise because of their disability. They do not need to be claiming tuition fees and/or living cost support from us in order to claim DSA.

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Allied Health Profession (AHP) Students

Students from England, Wales and Northern Ireland on 4 year undergraduate AHP courses e.g. physiotherapy, speech therapy, Radiography etc apply to us for their DSA not their local funding authority. Students on 2 year accelerated graduate entry degree courses should apply to their local funding authority for support.

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Allowances

DSA is comprised of 3 elements:

- The basic allowance
- The large items allowance
- The Non-Medical Personal Help allowance (NMPH)

[Basic allowance](#)

[Large items allowance](#)

[Non medical personal help \(NMPH\)](#)

[Non medical personal help \(NMPH\): admin charges](#)

[Non medical personal help \(NMPH\): who we can pay it to](#)

[Non medical personal help \(NMPH\): rates of pay](#)

Basic allowance

This is an annual allowance. In 2016-17 the rate for full time students is £1725. For part-time students the allowance is pro rata, e.g. a student studying for 50% of the length of a full time course would be entitled to £863 (50% of the basic allowance).

The basic allowance is intended to cover small items of equipment and consumables such as:

- Dictaphones

- Photocopying costs
- Printer cartridges
- Internet
- Braille Paper

We do not pay for:

- Adaptations to course handouts

A student may also claim the extra cost of medically-certified special dietary needs under this allowance – see the section [Special Dietary Needs](#) for more information.

Any unspent portion of the basic allowance can also be used to top up the Non Medical Personal Help (NMPH) or Large Items allowance if necessary.

We cannot pay more than the maximum basic allowance in any given academic year.

Students cannot carry any unspent portion of the basic allowance forward from one academic session to another.

Students cannot anticipate a DSA award i.e. they cannot use a proportion of their DSA entitlement from a future academic year to top up their support in the current academic year.

If a students' disability related expenses exceed the maximum allowed under the basic allowance they can apply for extra support from their institutions Discretionary Funds.

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Large items allowance

This allowance is available to eligible students and covers their whole programme of study, but we can make exceptions if there has been a significant gap between courses – see the section: [Change of Course – Large Items Allowance](#) for more information. For students commencing in 2016-17 the rate for is £5,160. This allowance is not proportioned down for part-time students. The Large Items Allowance can include items such as:

- Disability related software (e.g. Dragon voice recognition software)
- Other appropriate software (e.g. Microsoft Word)
- Printers
- Scanners
- Personal computers (PCs)
- Laptops
- Disability loops
- Radio aids
- CCTV to enlarge book print

We do not normally pay for:

- Equipment that we have not approved or that has not been recommended by a validated needs assessor
- Phone line installation or rental
- Any equipment that we feel an institution should be reasonably expected to provide
- Equipment that is required by all students on the course e.g. cameras for students on photography courses or DVD players required by Open University students
- Wheelchairs
- Scooters

If a student requires a piece of equipment for their course, that because of their disability is more expensive than that the standard piece of equipment that all students require, we can pay for the difference in price between the two.

Case study

Student A is on an Open University computing course. It is a compulsory requirement of the course that all students own a PC with a minimum specification. The PC recommended has a 14 inch screen and standard keyboard and mouse and costs approximately £500. However, due to Student A's visual disability he requires a PC with a 20 inch monitor and a specialised keyboard and mouse. These extra disability required changes take the price of the PC up to £800. SAAS agrees to pay £300 to the student because this is the difference between the standard specification that all students require and the higher specification that the student needs because of his disability.

Any unspent portion of the allowance cannot be used to top up the other two allowances.

We cannot pay more than the maximum large items allowance in any given academic year.

Students cannot anticipate a DSA award i.e. they cannot use a proportion of their DSA entitlement from a future academic year to top up support in the current academic year.

If necessary any unspent portion of the basic allowance can be used to top up the large items allowance.

If a student's disability related expenses exceed the maximum allowed under the large items allowance they can apply for extra support from their institutions Discretionary Funds.

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Non medical personal help (NMPH)

This is an annual allowance. In 2016-17 the rate for full time students is £20,520. For part-time students the allowance is scaled down pro rata e.g. a student studying for 50% of the length of a full time course would be entitled to £10,260 (50% of the basic allowance).

The NMPH allowance is intended to cover personal support such as:

- Readers
- Sign Language Interpreters
- Note takers (including text help operators)
- Scribes
- IT Training
- Study skills support
- Mentors
- Proof readers
- Helpers providing support for students to move around campus or access specific areas such as the library

We do not pay for:

- Subject specific tuition
- Personal help that is required outside class time e.g. help with getting dressed in the morning
- Any support that would normally be provided by Social Services
- Any services such as counselling or study support that the institution makes available to all its students
- Asfedic tuning or similar diagnostic services

- NMPH for scribing or similar support during exams – see section: [Exams](#) for more information

Any unspent portion of the NMPH allowance cannot be used to top up the other two allowances.

We cannot pay more than the maximum NMPH allowance in any given academic year.

Students cannot carry any unspent portion of the basic allowance forward from one academic session to another.

Students cannot anticipate a DSA award i.e. they cannot use a proportion of their DSA entitlement from a future academic year to top up support in the current academic year.

If necessary any unspent portion of the basic allowance can be used to top up the NMPH allowance.

If a student's disability related expenses exceed the maximum allowed under the NMPH allowance they can apply for extra support from their institutions Discretionary Funds.

If a student has been recommended both IT equipment/software and NMPH which provide the same type of support we would expect a student's needs assessment form to clearly outline a strategy to enable the student to become an independent learner.

Case Study

Student A has mild dyslexia and is starting an English Literature course. In the first year his needs assessment report recommends that he be awarded DSA for a laptop with specialised dyslexia software, study skills support for two hours per week, proof-reading support for 3 hours per week and a note taker for 10 hours per week.

In his needs assessment it is noted that as he becomes familiar with his specialised software and is able to take on board the strategies developed in his study skills classes, the amount of NMPH he will need will go down. As part of the long term strategy that has been developed between the student and his disability advisor he is going to learn to touch type so that he can take his own notes instead of relying on a note-taker.

As a result of this planning when he goes into second year student A has fully developed his touch typing skills and no longer requires a note-taker. The amount of study skills support he requires has also decreased and is now down to 1 hour a fortnight.

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Non medical personal help (NMPH): admin charges

Institutions who recruit and employ their own support workers can add an admin charge, up to a maximum of 25%, onto the hourly rate that they charge us.

The admin charge can be used to cover the following areas only:

- Annual leave
- Maternity leave
- Sick leave
- Pension contributions
- National insurance
- Line management of support staff

Case study

Institution A employs a pool of support workers to work as readers, proof readers and note takers for their own disabled students. The hourly rate they pay the support worker is £10 per hour. However, their HR team calculate that the costs they incur meeting their legal employer obligations with regards to annual and sick leave, costs an additional £1.50 per hour (15% of the hourly rate). Therefore, the rate they can invoice us is £11.50 per hour (£10 + £1.50).

Students who employ their own support workers can seek reimbursement from us for any admin charges they incur if they use a professional payroll company to pay their support worker. They will need to provide us with documentary evidence from their payroll company to claim this.

We will not pay the student for any costs they incur with regards to the following:

- Producing an employment contract
- Disclosure Scotland checks
- Training for their support worker
- Travel for their support worker
- Materials for their support worker e.g. pens and paper
- Employers national insurance costs

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Non medical personal help (NMPH): who we can pay it to

If a student uses a support worker employed by their institution or a private company, we can pay the institution or agency direct. If a student employs their own support worker we can only pay the student who will then have to pass the money onto their support worker.

If we are made aware that the student is not reimbursing their support worker we will seek to recover all monies paid out to the student.

There may be certain cases where, due to the student's disability, they are unable to handle any financial transactions themselves; in those cases we can consider paying the student's helper directly. The student's disability advisor would have to provide evidence under our exceptional cases procedure before we could consider this. However, we would expect that as most students already deal with their own finances for example paying rent, mobile phone contracts etc they should also be capable of paying their support worker too.

To prevent conflicts of interest we cannot pay NMPH to an individual if that individual also carried out the student's needs assessment report.

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Non medical personal help (NMPH): rates of pay

In session 2010/11 we introduced guidelines on suitable rates of pay for personal helpers. These rates of pay were decided after researching the various rates currently being charged by Institutions, private companies and students employing their own helpers. The rates of pay will be looked at each year to ensure that they are appropriate.

- Classroom/library assistants: £6.70 - £9 per hour (for students employing their own support worker)
- Classroom/library assistant: £10 - £18 (if using a support worker from an agency or institution)
- IT trainers: £11.50 - £45 (depending on qualifications/level of experience)
- Mentor: £10 - £45 (depending on qualifications/level of experience)
- Note-taker: £6.70 - £9 per hour (for students employing their own support worker)

- Note-taker: £10 - £18 (if using a support worker from an agency or institution)
- Personal support assistant: £10 - £18 depending on qualifications/level of experience)
- Proof-reader: £6.70 - £9 per hour (for students employing their own support worker)
- Proof-reader: £10 - £18 (if using a support worker from an agency or institution)
- Reader: £6.70 - £9 per hour (for students employing their own support worker)
- Reader: £10 - £18 (if using a support worker from an agency or institution)
- Sign language interpreter: £11.50 - £45
- Study support assistant: £11.50 - £45 (depending on qualifications/level of experience)

We recognise that some continuing students may be using helpers whose rate is higher than what we will now pay. In these cases, as long as the rate charged is not excessive, these students can continue to employ their helper at their current rate. However, if they change their helper, the rate of pay for the new helper should fall within our specified range.

There may be exceptional cases where the recommended cost of the recommended support worker is higher than our normal rates e.g. if a student is in a remote area there may only be one agency supplying the support that they need. In these cases we can consider paying a higher rate under our exceptional cases procedure, providing we have supporting evidence from the student's disability advisors.

The rates of pay that we will consider fall into two categories; rates for students employing their own, non specialist support worker, and rates payable to institutions and private companies where the helper is suitably trained and qualified. These different pay scales reflect that fact that where students employ their own helper e.g. a reader, the individuals carrying out this work are usually unqualified family members or friends, whereas the support workers used by private companies and institutions are usual trained and qualified in their specific area of support. However, if a student employs their own and that support worker is trained/qualified in carrying out the required support we can consider paying them at the higher rate.

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Appeals – Students Appealing against a needs assessment

If a student wishes to appeal against the recommendations in their needs assessment they should first of all appeal directly to the institution or Access Centre that carried out their assessment. The institution or Access Centre that provided the assessment should provide the student with a copy of their appeals process. If they are not happy with their response we can appoint an Independent Arbitrator to look at the assessment.

If they are unhappy with the reply they receive from the Independent Arbitrator, they can write to our Chief Executive asking for a review of the case. They will normally receive a reply within 10 working days. The Chief Executive's decision is final in terms of the Agency's procedures. If they are still not satisfied with the reply from the Chief Executive, the student (or their representative) have the right to refer their case to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) for consideration.

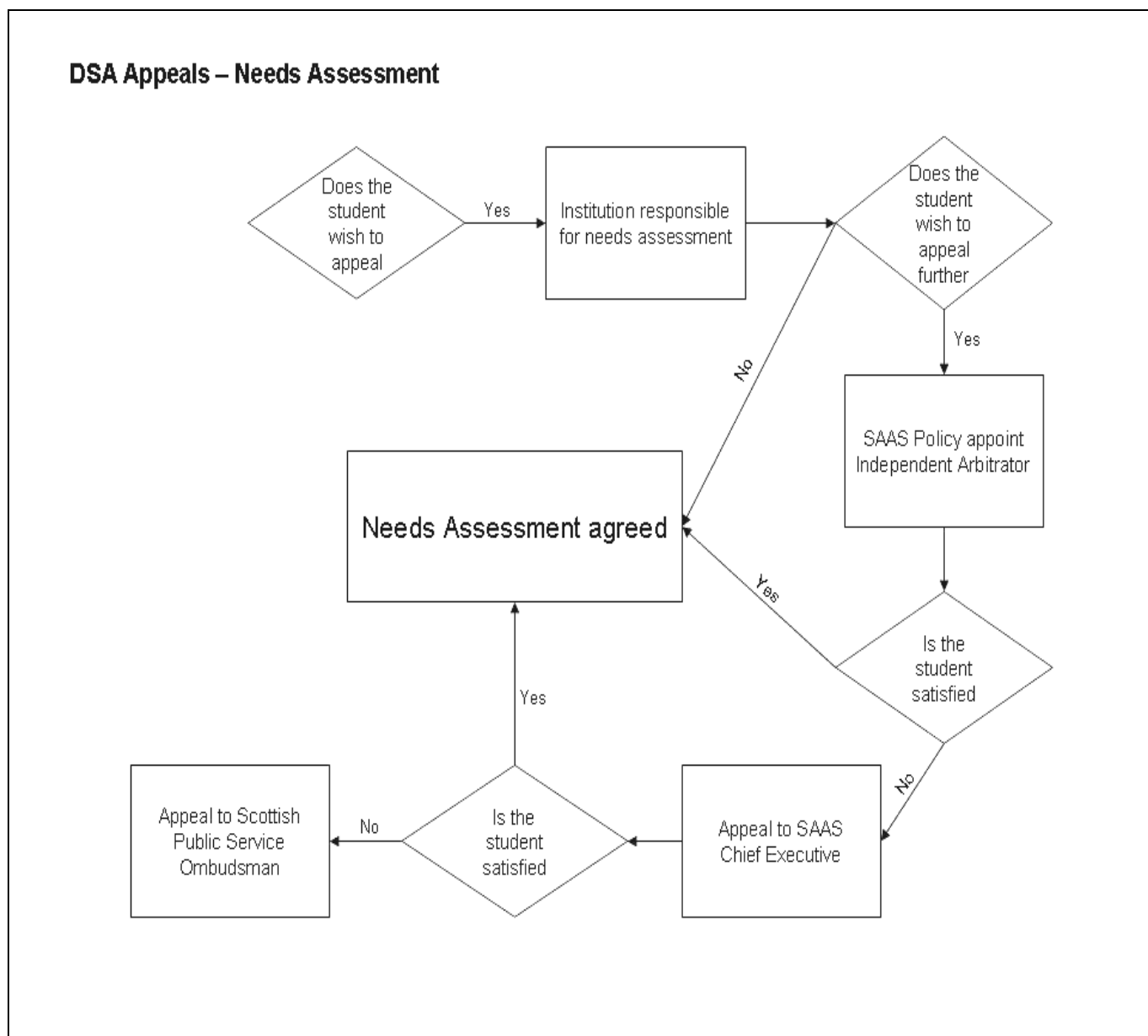
The Ombudsman can investigate claims of maladministration but will normally only do so once the student has exhausted the Agency's procedures as detailed above. They should contact the Ombudsman, preferably in writing, within 12 months after the day they first became aware of the grounds for complaint. The SPSO's office is based at 4 Melville Street, Edinburgh, EH3 7NS and their contact details are:

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman www.spsso.org.uk
 Freepost EH641
 Edinburgh Tel: 0800 377 7330
 EH3 0BR

Recording, monitoring and reviewing appeals

If appeals or complaints reveal shortcomings on our part, we use this information to review and improve our procedures.

The following flowchart summarises the full appeals process:



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Applying for DSA

[How to apply for DSA](#)

[Applications received near the end of a course or academic year](#)

[Completing the DSA form](#)

[Continuing students](#)

How to apply for DSA

Applications and guidance notes for DSA are available from the beginning of April each year. Applications are available directly from us and on our website at www.saas.gov.uk. We also send an allocation to every college and university in Scotland at the start of the session.

There are two DSA forms:

- DSA FT – for full time DSA students who are claiming living cost and or tuition fee support from SAAS
- DSA O – for part-time, distance learning and full time students not claiming tuition fees or living cost support.

We also produce a set of guidance notes for students explaining the kind of support they may be entitled to under DSA.

When applying new students must:

- Ensure that their DSA form has been signed (and endorsed if studying part-time) by their institution and themselves
- Enclose medical evidence/confirmation of their disability
- Enclose any other applicable supporting documents e.g. quotes from taxi companies
- Enclose a copy of their needs assessment if this has already been carried out

Continuing students must:

- Ensure that their DSA form has been signed (and endorsed if studying part-time) by their institution and themselves.
- Enclose a letter from their disability advisor confirming what support and/or equipment they require
- Enclose any other applicable supporting documents e.g. quotes from taxi companies

Students who are also applying to SAAS for tuition fees and/or a student loan must also ensure that they have submitted their application for main support either along with or before they submit their DSA application. We cannot assess their entitlement to DSA until this form has been processed.

Needs assessments reports/DSA application forms should always:

- Sufficiently justify the recommendations and how they relate to the student's study
- Demonstrate what reasonable adjustments have been made by the institution to support the student
- Clearly relate to how the support will enable the student to become, within reason, an independent learner and ultimately help to prepare them for their vocational end goal
- Relate to the needs of the student as a result of their impairment
- Demonstrate how the DSA will provide the support that is required for the student to be on a level playing field with their peers
- Fully complete the application form/needs assessment. If a particular section has been left blank a brief explanation should be given

The closing date for DSA applications for session 2016-17 is 31st March 2017.

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Applications received near the end of a course or academic year

Students can apply for DSA up until 31st March in the year that their course or academic year ends. However, if students apply for items of equipment or NMPH towards the end of their course or academic year we might restrict the DSA we pay out or look to provide alternative forms of support instead.

In order to pay DSA near the end of a student's course or academic year we would require the following from the student's disability advisor:

- An explanation of why the application has been made so late in the year
- Confirmation of why the support is required now
- Information on how the student had managed on their course prior to their application
- Confirmation that there is no support available from other sources e.g. loan of equipment from the institution for the remainder of the academic year
- Confirmation of what forms of reasonable adjustment have been made by the institution to support the student and why the student still requires additional support through the DSA

If we are satisfied that the student does require the equipment recommended we might look at paying for the hire of equipment instead of purchase, particularly if the student is nearing the end of their final year, or alternatives such as NMPH instead.

Where we agree to the purchase of equipment for students who are nearing the end of an academic year we must be satisfied that the student intends to return to their studies after the summer break. Where students subsequently do not re-enrol we may seek to recover the monies paid out.

We will not pay for any equipment that the student purchased prior to attending a needs assessment – see the section [retrospective claims](#) for more information.

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Completing the DSA form

We operate a paperless office system and electronically scans all forms and correspondence onto our student support database (StEPS). To enable us to scan and process documents as quickly as possible all forms and correspondence should be sent in the following format:

- Use original DSA forms (either the yellow paper forms issued to all institutions or the PDF version which can be downloaded from our website)
- Complete the DSA form using black ink
- Send us clear photocopies of any documents we ask for (e.g. Educational Psychologist reports) not original documents. We destroy all documents after 30 days

Do not:

- Use highlighter pens as this shows up as blank text on our system
- Send original copies of documents e.g. Educational Psychologists reports
- Use coloured ink as it does not always show up clearly on our system and means that we have to photocopy the documents before scanning them
- Use your own in-house version of the DSA form

Remember to:

- Enclose all supporting documentation with the form whenever possible, do not send them separately
- Ensure that the form has been signed by both the student and the disability advisor
- Ensure that for part-time and distance-learners the endorsement box has been completed
- Use our pro-formas (where appropriate)

Once the disability advisor has signed the SAAS DSA form it should not be passed back to the student. This is one of our audit requirements and it is to ensure that the student does not add extra items or support to the form that have not been agreed by the disability advisor.

When required, we can provide alternative versions of the DSA forms and notes in the following formats:

- Braille
- Large print
- Audio
- Microsoft Word

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Continuing students

Continuing students do not need to have a new needs assessment for each year of their course, however, if they have a change of circumstances then it may be necessary to carry out a new assessment, for example:

- They have changed to a completely new course or institution
- There has been a change in their medical condition

Where there is no change in the student's circumstances, if the student is claiming a continuance of their support e.g. non medical help or photocopying costs, they should simply provide the following:

- The appropriate DSA form, signed by themselves and their disability advisor
- A letter from the their disability advisor confirming what support they require e.g. if they require NMPH the letter should state the number of hours and the cost per hour
- A third party agreement form if payment for any equipment recommended is to be made direct to the institution

In the case of NMPH the support should be reviewed each year to ensure that the level of support received in previous years is still appropriate.

Once we have processed their application we will send a letter to the student to confirm the level of support they will receive, as well as payment for any additional equipment or consumables that have been requested.

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Bankruptcy

If a supplier of specialist equipment goes bankrupt before supplying the equipment, under insolvency law a student could become a creditor of the bankrupt's estate and potentially recover the money they have paid out or receive the equipment if the supplier still has it.

If the student is unable to obtain their equipment or recover their money we can make another award under DSA subject to the maximum payable under the allowance. If the amount of DSA they have left is not enough to meet the full cost of their equipment they would have to pay any difference themselves.

However, before we could consider payment the student would have to provide us with written evidence stating that they had not received the original goods and would not be able to recover the equipment or funds from the supplier.

Case study

A student is awarded £3500 under the large items allowance to purchase a computer and software. However, the company goes bankrupt before their equipment arrives and they are advised that they will be unable to claim the money back. As the student still needs the equipment to do their course we can

award the student £1,660 (the remainder of their large items allowance) and £1,725 (the unspent portion of their basic allowance for that session) making a total of £3,385. As this is £115 less than the cost of the equipment the student will have to make up the shortfall themselves.

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Books

We will not normally pay for books as this is something that all students are required to buy regardless of their disability. We would expect an institution to make some reasonable adjustments to support students who may need to borrow a book from their institution library but because of their disability requires a copy for a significantly longer period of time. Once evidence has been provided that all other reasonable adjustments have been made and a need still exists, then we may consider payment in the following circumstances:

- Where students require books in an alternative format e.g. large print or audio we can pay the difference in cost between the standard and alternative format only. We will not pay for the full cost of a large print or audio book.
- Books that aid students with study difficulties e.g. study skills books for dyslexic students

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Change of course – large items allowance

The large items allowance is awarded for the duration of a student's **course of study** not for an individual course. Therefore, if a student changes courses without a break in study e.g from year one of a BA in English to year one of a BA in Drama or progress from one course straight to another, e.g. from a BA to a Postgraduate Diploma they will not receive a new large items allowance.

Case study 1

Student A is on a BA Mathematics course. She applies for DSA and we award her £4,500 under the large items allowance for a computer and software. However, after a year she decides to change to a MEng and as a result requires some additional software and a scanner costing £2,000. Although she only has £660 left of her large items allowance she can use £1,340 from the basic allowance for that session to make up the remainder of the £2,000. If she requires any further equipment during her course she will have to use her small items allowance as her large items allowance has now been exhausted.

If a student starts a new course after a short break in study they may be entitled to a new large items allowance but we would need confirmation that the equipment they had received was no longer adequate. If a student returns to education after a significant break in study they will normally be entitled to a new large items allowance.

Case study 2

Student B is enrolled on a one year HNC course for which we award them £2,000 for a computer. After a year away from education working in industry he decides to return to college to do an HND. As he has only had one year outwith education and as all the original equipment he received under DSA is still working he is not entitled to a new large items allowance. However, he still has £3,160 of his original large items allowance left which he can use to extend the warranty on his computer and to purchase any additional equipment and software that he requires for his HND course.

Case study 3

We award student C £3,000 to buy a laptop computer, printer, scanner and software while on a BA course. Five years after graduating she gets accepted onto a PGDE course. As it has been five years

since she was last awarded DSA and her original equipment is no longer working she is entitled to a new large items allowance for her new course.

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Consumables

We can pay for the cost of consumables such as paper, ink and photocopying costs if a student incurs additional charges directly related to their disability.

As all students will generally have some costs associated with this we will only pay for consumables when it can be demonstrated that because of their disability a student has incurred extra costs e.g. a visually impaired student who needs to print documents in a bigger font or with double spacing. In these cases we will only reimburse costs that are over and above the expenses that a non disabled student would reasonably be expected to pay.

When submitting a request for consumables institutions should provide us with an estimate of the costs for a non disabled student as well as the additional costs incurred by the disabled student. Clear supporting evidence must be provided to explain why the student will incur the extra costs.

Students must send in receipts for all consumables purchased whenever possible. If they are unable to provide receipts – e.g. if they are using a photocopier which does not issue receipts – they should send us a covering letter explaining why.

If a student does not use all of their consumable allowance they must return any unspent portion of it to us at the end of the academic year.

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Course related software

We will not normally pay for any course related software as this is something that institutions should make available to all of their students. Where students have a disability institutions should make reasonable adjustments to ensure that they can access the appropriate software in the manner best suited to their needs.

Case study 1

Student A has ADHD and is studying for an HNC in music composition. For part of his course he needs to use specialised software to produce an original music score. The college makes this software available in its computer labs for all students, however, because of his disability student A is unable to work there as the noise of the other students distracts him and prevents him from concentrating. As a reasonable adjustment his college agree to set up a PC with the appropriate software in a quiet room that the student can study alone in.

Case study 2

Student B has mobility difficulties and is on a BA Architecture course. As part of his course he has to produce technical designs of buildings using specialised drafting software. The university makes this software available to all architecture students in a specialised computer lab, however, the student is due to have an operation on his spine and will be unable to attend college for 3 months. So that he doesn't fall behind with his course work his university lend him a laptop which has the specialised software installed on it so he can do the work from home.

Where you feel that there is a strong disability related requirement for purchase of subject specific software and the student's institution has made all reasonable adjustments you can make an application to the DSA under our exceptional cases process.

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Digital Hearing Aids

We do not normally pay for digital hearing aids as they are something that students normally require regardless of their attendance on their course and are usually available through the NHS. However, we can consider paying for them in exceptional circumstances. To enable us to consider paying for them we require the following:

- Confirmation that the student requires digital hearing aids solely because of their attendance at college or university
- Confirmation that they cannot get them on the NHS or that if they are on a waiting list that they will not be able to get them within the next academic year
- An explanation of why other forms of support e.g. note takers, induction loops etc are not suitable alternatives

For more information about how to make an application for an exceptional or non standard piece of equipment see the section - [Exceptions](#)

Partnership Matters provides further information about the roles and responsibilities of other agencies such as the NHS that are involved in supporting students with additional support needs see the section – [Partnership Matters](#) for more information.

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Distance Learning Study

DSA is available to Distance Learning, including Open University (OU) students who are studying at course a HNC level or above.

Distance-learning students should fill out the form DSA O.

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[Length of study](#)

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DSA rates

For distance-learning students the basic items allowance and NMPH are scaled down pro rata e.g. a student studying for 50% of the length of a full time course would be entitled to £863 and £10,260 (50% of the basic allowance and NMPH respectively).

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Length of study

To be eligible for support part-time students must be undertaking at least 50% of the normal length of a full time course and must not take more than twice the normal length of time to complete it i.e. a student undertaking a 4 year BA on a part time basis must take no more than 8 years to complete it. For OU students this means they must be studying at least 60 credits each year.

In exceptional cases we can fund students who have to cut back on their time in one session, due to medical reasons, providing they make up the time in any subsequent years and do not take longer than twice the length of the standard course to complete it.

For example a student on a 1 year HNC course could exceptionally do 60% of the course in year 1 and 40% in year two.

In these cases you must contact us to get approval and provide good reasons and supporting evidence.

Case study

Student A is in the fourth year of a 6 year BA at the Open University. She has to go into hospital and knows that due to the recuperation time she will only be able to complete 30 credits of her course that instead of 60. However, she feels that she will be able to make up the remaining 30 credits over the final two years of her course by studying for an additional an additional 15 credits in her remaining two years..

Her disability advisor puts a case to us with supporting evidence from the student's doctor and academic advisor confirming her circumstances. We exceptionally agree to continue funding the student in year four as the overall length of her course will not be extended beyond the original 6 years.

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Disabled Students Stakeholder Group (DSSG)

The Disabled Students Stakeholder Group was established to bring together stakeholders and key delivery partners involved in supporting students with disability related additional needs. Current members include representatives from The Scottish Government, Scottish colleges, universities and Access Centres, The National Union of Students, RNIB, RNID, BRITE as well as Directors of Education, Social Work and Student Services.

The structure and remit of the DSSG is currently under review by the Scottish Government and information about its future role will be announced shortly.

Information about the work of the DSSG including minutes of previous meetings can be found on the Scottish Government website at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/Funding-Support-Grants/FFL/stakeholdergroups>

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Early payment of DSA

We will normally make payments to disabled students two weeks before the start date of their course. This is to ensure that they have enough time to purchase and put in place all of the equipment and support they require for the start of their course.

However, in exceptional cases we can make a payment for the 1st August in the year in which they start their course, e.g. if a student requires piece of equipment that has to be specially made for them or if they are required to attend a summer school at their institution before they start their course proper. In these cases we will require written evidence explaining why the student requires the money early.

If a student is awarded DSA in advance of starting their course and subsequently does not attend we will seek to recover all monies we have paid out.

Eligibility

In order to claim DSA students must meet certain eligibility requirements with regards to their course and residency status, see the sections – eligibility – [course](#) and Eligibility – [residency](#) for more information.

However, even if a student does not meet our eligibility rules institutions can still include them in their returns to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) for institutional support such as the Disabled Students' Premium (DSP). Further information about this can be obtained from the SFC.

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Age

Unlike the eligibility criteria for the Student Loan, there is no maximum age requirement that students must meet to be eligible for the DSA. However, students must be of at least school leaving age to apply for DSA: this is normally 16 years of age but can in some cases be 15.

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Course eligibility

Students on the following courses are eligible to claim DSA support:

- HNC
- HND
- Degree or equivalent level courses
- Foundation year of a degree course if the student has enrolled for the whole course not just the foundation year, and the foundation year is a necessary and compulsory part of the course
- Diploma in Nursing or Midwifery
- Honours degree in Nursing or Midwifery
- Full time Post Graduate courses providing the student is not receiving support from another source e.g. a Research Council
- Part-time Post Graduate courses providing it is at least 50% of the length of the full time course and the student is not receiving support from another source e.g. a Research Council
- Part-time undergraduate courses at HNC level or above which are at least 50% of the length of the full time course
- Distance learning courses providing the student is undertaking at least 50% of the length of a full time course
- Open University courses providing the student is studying at least 60 credits in a year

The following students **are not entitled** to claim DSA support:

- EU Students receiving a fees only award
- Part-time Students undertaking less than 50% of a full time course
- Open University students studying less than 60 credits
- Students undertaking a course below HNC level

- Students who are receiving funding from their Local Education Authority, Student Funding England, Student Funding Wales, or their Local Library Board
- Postgraduate Students receiving funding from another source e.g. a Research Council or the Social Work Department
- Students on Access courses
- Students who do not meet our normal residency regulations
- Students on HNC, HND or degree level courses that have not been designated as eligible for support from us e.g. worked based learning courses

Where students undertake 2 or more courses in an academic year we can only pay DSA for one course, even if both courses are studied at the same institution. E.g. if a student is doing a full time HNC course at college and also doing a 60 credit OU course at home they can claim DSA for one of the courses but not both. It is up to the student to decide which course they wish to apply for DSA for.

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Migrant workers

EU and EEA nationals who started their course prior to session 2012/2013 may be eligible for DSA if they meet our “Migrant Worker” criteria. Eligibility for support as a migrant worker is assessed at the start of each year of a student’s course and if they are found not to meet the criteria in one year of their course they will not be eligible for DSA, even if they have received DSA in a previous year.

If you have a student who has been awarded DSA as a migrant worker you should check with us at the start of each academic year to see if they will be entitled to support in the forthcoming year before you submit a DSA application.

For new students who start a course in session 2012/2013 the rules around migrant workers are different. If we award them DSA as a migrant worker at the start of their course they will remain eligible for DSA for the duration of their course: you will only have to recheck their eligibility if they change course.

More information about migrant workers can be found on our website www.saas.gov.uk .

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Residency

We must be satisfied that students meet the residency requirements before they can apply for DSA.

To meet our residence conditions, a student must have been ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man for the three years immediately before the relevant date (the first day of the first academic year of the course (1st August for Autumn start courses and 1st December for January start courses)). If you they are not a UK or EU national, they must also have been settled in the UK (as set out in the Immigration Act 1971) on the relevant date. Finally they must also be ordinarily resident in Scotland on the relevant date.

Eligibility at the beginning of a programme of study normally determines eligibility for the duration of a student’s studies, however in very exceptional circumstances e.g. if a student is awarded refugee status by the Home Office or the country in which they are a national becomes a member of the EU they may become eligible part way through their course. In these cases they will become eligible for DSA at the same time that they become eligible for mains support i.e. tuition fees and living cost support. They will not be entitled to make retrospective claims for any support they received or equipment that they bought prior to their residency status changing.

Students who do not meet the usual residence conditions for support may still be eligible for support in certain circumstances. Residency is a very complicated issue and if students have any doubts at all about their eligibility for support they should contact our General Inquiry Unit on 0300 555 0505 for advice. Further information about residency can be found on our website at www.saas.gov.uk

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Equipment hire

In some cases we might decide to pay for the rental of equipment rather than purchase. For example:

- When it is more cost effective for the student to rent rather than buy
- When a student is nearing the end of their course or academic year
- When the equipment is only required for a short period of time

Each case will be judged on its own merits and will depend on factors such as the availability of the equipment for hire or whether the student intends to return to their studies in the following academic year.

Case study

Student A had mobility problems and was enrolled on a BSc geology course. As part of his course he had to attend field trips along the Scottish coast. Although his mobility difficulties did not cause him any problems walking around campus his doctor confirmed that he would not be able to walk along the uneven coastal terrain. The student applied to the DSA for a quad bike costing £2,000 which would enable him to access the field trip sites.

As his course tutor confirmed that he was only required to go on 3 one day field trips per year we refused to pay for the purchase of a quad bike but agreed to pay for the hire of a quad bike, at a cost of £100 per day, instead.

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Equipment – what happens after a student finishes their course

All the equipment purchased through the DSA is and will stay the property of the student. They may decide to offer the equipment to their institution, an appropriate charity or another student to use, but they do not have to do so.

For more information about what happens to equipment when a student withdraws part way through their course see the section – [Withdrawal from course](#).

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Evidence of disability

Payment of diagnosis

Proof required

Proof required for dyslexia or specific learning difficulties

Payment of diagnosis

Although we cannot pay for the cost of any diagnosis (including doctor's letters and Educational Psychologists' reports) institutions can offer help from their Discretionary Funds. Students should contact their institution for further advice if they have to pay for evidence of their disability.

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Proof required

In the first year that they apply for DSA, students must provide us with supporting documents to confirm their disability or learning difficulty (students should send us a **clear photocopy** of any documents we ask for, not original documents. We destroy all documents after 30 days).

For medical conditions (other than dyslexia or specific learning difficulties) we require evidence in the form of a diagnosis from a qualified professional including:

- GP
- Nurse
- Occupational therapist
- Physiotherapist
- Audiologist
- Psychiatric Nurse

Other forms of evidence:

We can also accept evidence of receipt of support or benefits that have been provided by another agency such as the Department of Work and Pensions, providing they required the student to undertake a diagnosis of their disability. For us to be able to accept these documents as proof of disability they must state the nature of the student's disability and the date the original diagnosis was undertaken.

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Proof required for dyslexia or specific learning difficulties

In the first year that they apply for DSA, students must provide us with supporting documents to confirm their dyslexia or specific learning difficulty (students should send us a **clear photocopy** of any documents we ask for, not original documents as we destroy all documents after 30 days).

The evidence submitted must be from one of the following:

- An Educational Psychologist
- An educational professional or specialised teacher who holds a current practising certificate in assessing specific learning difficulties issued by their relevant professional association e.g. the Professional Association of Teachers of Students with Specific Learning Difficulties (PATOSS)
- An educational professional or specialised teacher who holds a current qualification that allows Associate Membership of the British Dyslexia Association (AMBDA)

We can also accept confirmation from a previous educational establishment such as a school or college that confirms a diagnosis of dyslexia or specific learning difficulties has been made by a one of the professionals listed above.

If a student has evidence from a professional that we have not listed above they should contact us to check if we can accept it before their form is sent to us.

Confirmation of dyslexia or specific learning difficulties must be submitted in a separate document to the main needs assessment report.

In all cases the evidence submitted must confirm the following:

- The name of the person who carried out the assessment
- The qualification of the person who carried out the assessment
- The type of assessment carried out
- The disability or specific learning difficulty that the student has
- The impact that the student's disability or learning difficulty has/will have on their ability to study
- The nature of any additional support they have received/are likely to require as a result of their attendance on their course

Some students may have had screening tests e.g. DAST or LADS carried out which indicate dyslexia. As screening for dyslexia does not constitute a diagnostic assessment we cannot accept the results of this test alone as confirmation of a disability.

Please note that if we refer a student for a needs assessment their assessor may ask them to supply additional evidence before they can carry out the assessment. They will discuss this with the student when they arrange their assessment.

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Exams

If a student needs NMPH in an exam (including re-sits) e.g. a scribe or sign language interpreter we cannot pay for the cost under the DSA. Instead this cost should be met by the institution as a reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act.

However, students already in receipt of DSA who have to resit exams outwith term time are entitled to claim for other additional support they require to undertake the exam, e.g. travel costs for students with mobility difficulties.

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Exceptions

Although this guidance should cover most of the things that we can and cannot pay for there may be exceptional cases that are not covered in this guidance or things that do not easily fall within the scope of what we normally pay for. These cases are known as exceptions and we have a formal process for dealing with them.

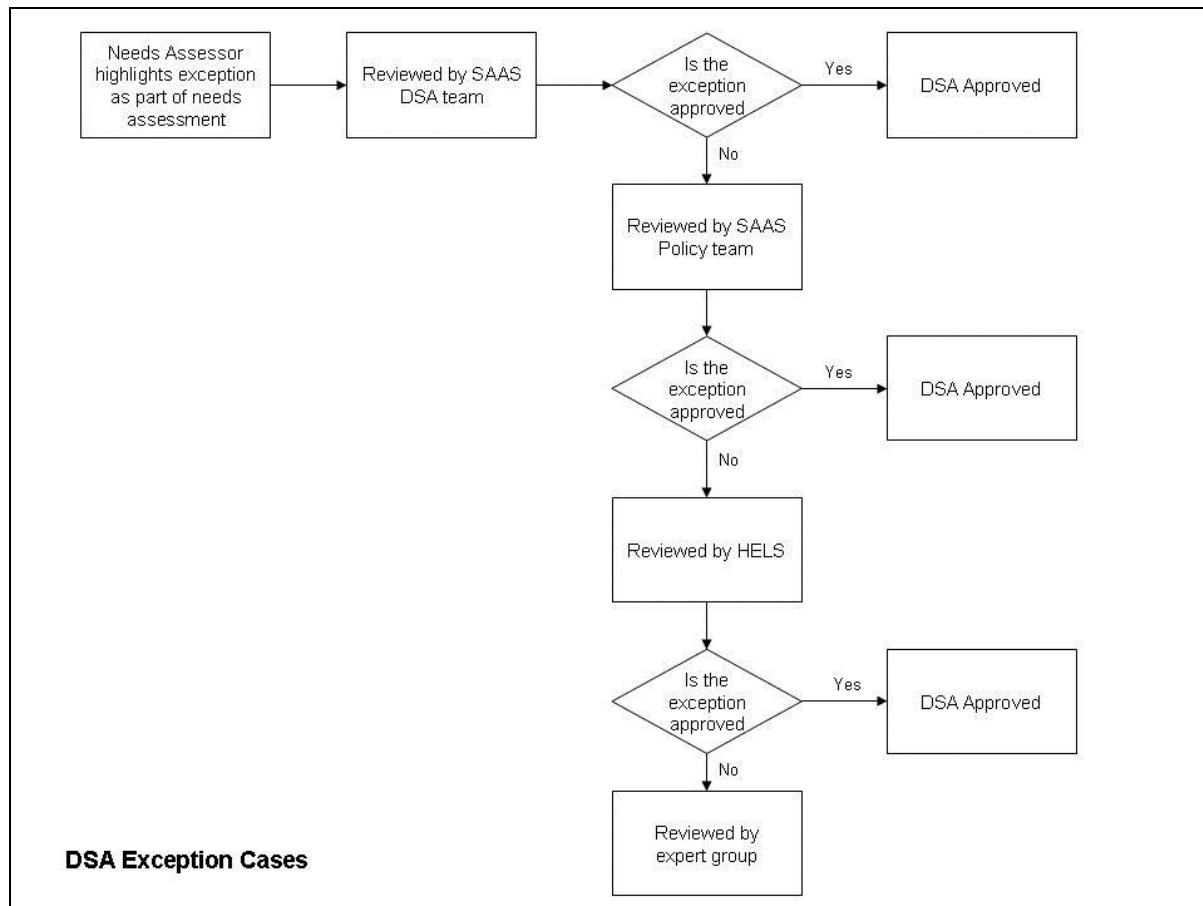
In the first instance Disability Advisors should make sure that the equipment or support the student requires cannot be provided for by another department e.g. Social Work, NHS or a Local Authority, also that it does not fall to the institution under the Equality Act. Once it has been established that the support required cannot be provided by another organisation, to enable us to consider it under our exceptions rules the following process should be followed:

Initially the needs assessor should highlight the exception as part of their needs assessment, ensuring that they provide us with full details of why the student requires the support/equipment, why it is not available from another source e.g. Social Work department or institution and what alternatives have been looked at.

The request will go to the DSA team initially and if they cannot approve the item they will forward it to the SAAS policy team for a review. If the Policy team are unable to make a decision they will refer the case to the policy team in the Higher Education and Learning Support division of the Scottish Government (HELS). Finally if appropriate we can ask an expert panel made up of members of the Disabled Students' Stakeholders Group to review the case and provide a final opinion. The flow chart below

shows the exceptions process in full and the case studies highlight some exceptional items that DSA team have recently made decisions on.

As each exceptional case is looked at on an individual basis the decision to award support should not be taken as setting a precedent with regards to similar claims in the future. There will be instances where we agree a piece of equipment or type of support for one student but refuse support for another. Similarly there will be occasions where support or equipment that we normally refuse to pay for is agreed for an individual student because their circumstances are significantly different enough to justify it.



Exceptional cases approved under the DSA

Case study 1

Student A had Crohn’s disease and lives in Orkney. She was accepted by a university in Edinburgh to study a four year BA in German. Student A stayed in university halls of residence in year one of her course and also in year 3 when she undertook a compulsory year abroad at a university in Germany.

As a result of her illness she required a private en-suite room and applied to the DSA to cover the cost of her accommodation.

As evidence she sent in a letter from her doctor confirming the need for a private bathroom, a letter from her institution showing the cost of the accommodation and a letter of support from her disability advisor.

The DSA does not normally cover any accommodation related costs for disabled students as they would need to stay in accommodation regardless of their attendance on a course of study. However, as Student A required more specialised accommodation than other students as a direct result of her disability we agreed to pay the difference between the standard university accommodation and the en-suite room for the student’s first year and also her year abroad. As the cost of a standard room in the university halls was £60 per week and the en-suite accommodation £80 we agreed to pay the student £20 per week.

We did not cover the full cost of accommodation as the student would need to stay in halls of residence regardless of her disability.

Case study 2

Student B applied for DSA for the purchase of a sewing machine. She was on a BA Fashion Design course at an art college and as part of her course she had to design and make a range of clothes for the college's annual fashion show.

She requested money to purchase a sewing machine as her disability meant that she was often unable to leave her house and attend college.

As evidence she sent confirmation that while her disability sometimes prevented her from attending college she would still be able to work on her clothes from home. She also sent in evidence that explained that students on her course were not required to purchase a sewing machine of their own as the practical work was normally done at college and the college provided sewing machines for all their students to use there.

We agreed to pay for the sewing machine as it was something that the student required access to at home specifically because of her disability.

Exceptional cases rejected under the DSA

Case study 3

Student C was on a BA Music course and applied to the DSA for £2,500 to purchase a harp. Because of her disability she wasn't always able to practise at university and therefore wanted to do all of her musical practice at home.

After looking into it further we got confirmation from the student's tutor that all students on this course were required to either borrow, hire or purchase any instruments they needed for their course. He also confirmed that no students were able to borrow equipment from the university.

We refused the request as the purchase or lease of a harp was a cost that the student would have incurred regardless of her disability.

Case study 4

Student D had a rare learning difficulty that meant that he could not follow directions or memorise routes between different locations e.g. he could not travel from his home to his local shop without getting lost. As such he was not able to easily travel between different buildings and campuses at his university without someone accompanying him. To prevent his reliance upon the help of his fellow students he planned to buy a satellite navigation system to allow him to travel independently and he applied to the DSA to cover the cost.

His request was turned down as we felt that a satellite navigation device was something that he required for his day to day life and was not something that he needed specifically because of his attendance on his course.

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Extensions

Full student support, including tuition fees, living cost support and the DSA, can be considered in cases where students are required to extend their course by up to one year, because of their disability. This is not the same as students who are formally repeating a year. This rule applies in cases where a student remains full-time but may be undertaking a year of the course over a two year period.

Decisions regarding extension to study are taken by the team responsible for processing the student's main support application. They are not made by the DSA team.

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Extra curricular activities

DSA is not normally available for students undertaking university based extra curricular activities. However, where it can be demonstrated that the extra curricular activity is a course requirement e.g. drama students attending a drama club or a music students taking part in a Choral society then we can consider requests for DSA.

Case Study

Student A was studying Archaeology. During her third year all the students on her course were offered the chance to take part in an archaeological dig during the summer holidays. Although not a compulsory part of their course the university actively encouraged all their students to take part as it would allow them to gain valuable experience in their chosen field.

As the student was already receiving NMPH from the DSA she applied for a continuation of that support while she was on the dig.

Although it was not a compulsory part of her course we agreed to pay DSA because it was an activity that was related to her studies and if NMPH was not available student A would be put at a disadvantage compared to the rest of her classmates.

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Failure to attend course

Where we pay out money to students in advance of their course and the student subsequently fails to start their course we will seek to recover any monies paid out in respect of DSA.

If a student starts their course but withdraws part way through we may ask them to repay some or all of the DSA that they have been awarded – see the section [Withdrawal from course](#) for more information.

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Failure to buy recommended equipment

Student must buy equipment exactly as their assessor has recommended. If they are not happy with their assessment they should contact their assessor to discuss this before purchasing any equipment, see the section – [Appealing against a needs assessment](#) for more information.

If a student goes ahead and purchases different items to those recommended we will seek to recover some or all of the money paid out in respect of the DSA.

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Feedback

We continually monitor the service we provide to DSA students, their institutions and DSA advisors and are always looking for suggestions on how we can improve.

We carry out an annual survey of DSA students to monitor our performance and look at ways we can improve the service we provide. The results of this survey can be found on our website at http://www.saas.gov.uk/student_support/special_circumstances/dsa_customer_survey.htm

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Fraud

We require all students to submit copies of their receipts for all items purchased under the DSA with 6 weeks of the DSA award being made. When students fail to provide receipts or the amount on their receipts is less than the amount we awarded we will seek recovery of all monies that we have overpaid. We will not accept alternatives to receipts as proof of purchase such as photos of equipment or letters from friends and family stating that the items have been bought.

We also require that all invoices for NMPH, where a helper is employed directly by a student, be signed by both the helper and the student. Again where the amount claimed differs from the amount awarded we will recover any overpayments that may have occurred.

We take all aspects of fraud seriously and have a dedicated fraud team in the agency to deal with any cases that arise. We will seek recovery of any money we pay out that is subsequently found to have been paid as the result of a fraudulent claim. We will seek to prosecute any students who make fraudulent applications to us.

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Freshers' Week

Students are not normally eligible for DSA support during Freshers' week as this is not an official part of their course. However, we can award DSA for any course related activities a student may have to attend during this week e.g. inductions with tutors or campus tours.

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Fridges

Where students are living in communal halls of residence or shared accommodation we can pay for the cost of small personal fridges for students who require one specifically because of their disability e.g. diabetic students who require a separate fridge to keep their insulin in.

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Furniture

We can pay for computer furniture and other items of furniture which students require in their home or halls of residence specifically for study purposes, for example:

- desks for PCs
- docking stations for laptops
- ergonomic chairs/furniture
- lap trays for using a laptop in bed

However, we cannot pay for any adaptations a student requires to their home such as ramps, low level

links or similar. These types of specialist furniture would be required regardless of the student's attendance on their course. Students might be able to get help for this from their local authority or Social work department.

Where students require special furniture at their institution e.g. a special desk for wheelchair users this should be provided by their college or university under the Equality Act.

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Installation and set up costs

We can pay for the installation and set up costs for IT equipment and specialised software providing it is carried out by a recognised company or suitably qualified individual. We will not pay for installation or set up where it has been provided by friends or family.

Needs assessments and/or quotes for equipment should clearly specify if these costs should be paid in advance to the student or if they are to be paid after the work is carried out.

If the costs are to be paid for up front then the student must send in receipts for this along with the other receipts that they send it.

If the costs are to be paid for afterward then we will pay them on receipt of an invoice.

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Insurance

We will pay full warranty costs for IT and other equipment for the full duration of a student's course.

We will not pay for the cost of personal or home contents insurance, or for insurance for students in halls or residence. However, if a student's home contents insurance premium increases as a direct result of covering their DSA equipment we can pay the excess cost. In these cases students would need to supply a letter or quote from their insurance company which showed the extra costs.

We will not make a further payment for DSA equipment if a student loses or damages their equipment and is unable to replace it due to inadequate insurance.

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Internet

We can pay for the cost of internet connection or broadband only where there is a strong disability related justification for doing so. When recommending this disability advisors must clearly explain why the student cannot access the internet via another source e.g. their university or local library.

We will not pay for the cost of internet subscription where the student already has an existing internet connection.

We will not pay for the cost of internet subscription when the costs are included in a student's halls of residence or private rental costs.

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Invoices

We aim to process all correctly completed NMPH invoices within 3 weeks of receiving them. When submitting invoices to us to enable us to process them as quickly as possible please ensure that they include the following:

- Name of student
- Student's reference number
- Period the invoice covers
- The type of support the invoice covers

Please send invoices in monthly or termly and send individual invoices for each student.

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IT Training

We can pay for IT related training to enable students to use specialist software or equipment as follows:

- Training must be carried out by a recognised training company or suitably qualified individual
- Training will only be paid in arrears and on receipt of an invoice
- Training costs will normally be paid direct to the trainer

We will not pay for:

- Training provided by friends or relatives
- Training that is normally provided by the institution to all its students e.g. training on how to use in house software packages or intranet sites.
- Training on basic software applications such as MS Word (unless there are exceptional circumstances)
- Subscriptions to online training tools or services e.g. Concept Live
- IT training provided by the person who carried out the needs assessment
- Training on apps for iPhones, PDDs etc

If the specialised IT training a student requires can be provided by their institution we would expect that student would use this instead of getting their training from a private company or their software provider.

It would be useful if institutions could clearly explain to students why attending IT training is beneficial to them and that institutions should consider adapting training opportunities to suit the needs of the students.

The number of recommended hours of IT training and the cost of the training should be clearly detailed on the student's needs assessment form.

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Needs Assessments

If a student is applying for DSA for the first time or if their disability has changed significantly since they last applied, we will want them to have a needs assessment carried out.

A needs assessment is a report carried out by a qualified individual which lets us know the type of support and equipment they need to undertake their course.

[Needs Assessments](#)
[Change of course](#)

[Completing the report](#)

[Fee](#)

[How to become a validated institution](#)

[List of Scottish Access Centres and Institutions validated to carry out needs assessments](#)

Needs Assessments

The cost of the assessment fee is met directly by us and does not come out of the student's DSA allowance.

We will pay for the cost of a student's needs assessment providing:

- the student has a recognised disability
- the assessment is carried out by a validated institution http://www.saas.gov.uk/student_support/special_circumstances/dsa_needs.htm or an individual who is undergoing the BRITE training and the assessment is being submitted as part of their training
- the student is eligible for support from us, see the section – [Eligibility](#)

We cannot accept needs assessments from the following:

- BRITE qualified individuals who are working at an institution that is not validated by the Scottish Government
- Assessments by professional organisations such as the RNIB, RNID etc though assessors may consult these organisations when undertaking an assessment
- Assessments carried out by other government organisations such as Schools, Local authorities, Social Work Department etc

Where a student changes from one course to a completely different one e.g. from a BA in philosophy to a Diploma in Nursing and it is anticipated that their support needs and equipment needs will be significantly different as a result, we can pay for the cost of a new needs assessment if required.

We will not pay a needs assessment fee for short annual reviews of student support carried out for continuing DSA students.

All needs assessments must be submitted on our assessment pro forma.

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Change of course

A new needs assessment should not be carried out automatically every time a student changes course or institution. However, when a student changes from one course to a completely different one e.g. from a BA in philosophy to a Diploma in Nursing and it is anticipated that their support needs and equipment needs will be significantly different as a result, we can pay for the cost of a new needs assessment if it is required.

If a new needs assessment is needed assessors must explain the reasons behind the reassessment on the needs assessment pro-forma.

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Completing the report

You must complete the needs assessment report using our needs assessment pro-forma. If you send us a needs assessment that is not on the correct pro forma we will not process the application and instead will contact you and ask you to resubmit it on the correct form.

When recommending equipment each item must be listed individually within the main body of the report. We will not pay for any item listed on a quote if it is not also detailed in the actual report.

When making recommendations you should only send us one quote which details clearly what the student needs. Please do not send us a second quote showing what the student would like.

Where students wish to upgrade their equipment to a better spec they cannot do so using DSA money that they have saved on other items.

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Fee

When submitting an invoice for an assessment the fee should clearly show the costs per hour, the number of hours the assessment took and a break down of the work involved (see the example below):

ACCESS Centre fee:

Assessment	= 3 hours @ £30/h
Report	= 4 hours @ £30/h
Administration	= 2 hours @ £30/h
Total	= £270

It is not expected that every needs assessment will cost the same, as the time required to undertake an assessment will vary according to the needs of the student and their disability. The maximum rate that we will pay for needs assessments is £45 per hour.

If an assessor has to carry out a home assessment, due to the severity of a student's disability, we will pay for the associated travel costs of the assessor as well as the cost of one additional assessor to travel with them. We will not pay for the cost of a home assessment simply because the student finds it more convenient than travelling to an assessment centre.

We will not meet the cost of a needs assessment in the following circumstances:

- Where an institution carries out a needs assessment and subsequently finds out that the student does not meet our eligibility criteria (unless we had specifically referred the student directly to the Access Centre or institution).
- Where we feel that there is insufficient medical evidence to allow us to pay for a claim under DSA. If you are not sure if the evidence you hold will be sufficient please feel free to contact us beforehand to discuss.
- Where no equipment or support is recommended (unless we had specifically referred the student directly to the Access Centre or institution).
- Cases where we decide not to award DSA for any of the recommendations made in the report (unless we had specifically referred the student directly to the Access Centre or institution).

Once in receipt of an invoice we will send the payment for the assessment directly to the institution that carried out the assessment. You do not need to complete a 3rd party agreement from when claiming a needs assessment fee as the money comes directly from SAAS not from the student's DSA allocation.

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How to become a validated institution

We can only accept needs assessments from validated institutions. In 2004 the Scottish Government Stakeholder group produced a Toolkit, the purpose of which was to provide a route for institutions who wished to carry out their own assessments to become validated by us.

Following the completion of the pilot and its independent evaluation, the Scottish Government has introduced a formal process to enable institutions to apply to become validated to carry out needs assessments for SAAS students.

If an institution would like to become validated by the Scottish Government they should email Neil MacLennan in the Higher Education and Learning Support Division of the Scottish Government (HELS) in the first instance. His email address is neil.maclennan@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

More information about the application and validation process is available on the Scottish Government website at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/04/0195400/54013>

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List of Scottish Access Centres and Institutions validated to carry out needs assessments

The following Access Centres can carry out needs assessments in Scotland:

- Dundee University Access Centre
- Motherwell College Access Centre
- Stevenson College Access Centre

The following institutions are also currently validated by SAAS to carry out needs assessments:

http://www.saas.gov.uk/student_support/special_circumstances/dsa_needs.htm

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Non graduating students

Students enrolled on eligible courses, who because of their disability, are unable to complete certain modules and are, therefore, unable to fully graduate from their course can still apply for DSA providing:

- The course is one that is designated for by support form SAAS (see [course eligibility](#))
- They are studying for at least 50 % of the length of the full time course and don't take more than twice the length of the original course to complete it
- The meet the normal residency eligibility conditions (see the section, Eligibility – [residency](#))

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Outwith term-time expenses

We will not normally pay for DSA support outwith an institutions' standard term dates. However, there may be a few occasions where DSA can be paid, for example:

- Where students need to come into their institution to visit their tutor or use facilities at their institution that they cannot access elsewhere
- Exam resits

- Proof reading or other NMPH for students who have to produce a dissertation or other extensive course work in the summer break
- Field trips

In these cases we can consider paying DSA providing we have written evidence explaining why the student requires the additional support.

Please also see the following sections for more information about outwith term time expenses:

- [Early Payments of DSA](#)
- [Exams](#)
- [Extra Curricular activities](#)
- [Freshers' week](#)

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Partnership Matters

Partnership Matters is a document produced by the Scottish Government that provides information and guidance about the roles and responsibilities of other agencies such as the NHS and local authorities that are involved in supporting students with additional support needs. It is available on the Scottish Government website at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/05/08155445/0>

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Part-Time Study

DSA is available to part-time students who are studying a course a HNC level or above.

Part-time students should fill out the form DSA O.

[DSA rates](#)
[Length of study](#)

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DSA rates

For part-time students the amount of NMPH and the basic items allowance is reduced on a pro rata basis based on the percentage of the course they are doing or in the case of Open University students, the number of credits that they are studying.

- E.g. students undertaking 50% of the length of a full time course will receive 50% of the NMPH and basic allowance i.e. £863 (50% of £1,725)
- Open University students taking 90 credits will be entitled to receive 75% of the NMPH and basic allowance i.e. £1294 (50% of £1,725)

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Length of study

To be eligible for support part-time students must be undertaking at least 50% of the normal length of a full time course and must not take more than twice the normal length of time to complete it i.e. a student undertaking a 4 year BA on a part-time basis must take no longer than 8 years to complete it. For OU students this equates to at least 60 credits per year.

In exceptional cases we can fund students who have to cut back on their time in one session providing they make up the time in subsequent years and do not take longer than twice the length of the standard course to complete it. E.g. a student on a 1 year HNC course could exceptionally do 60% of the course in year 1 and 40% in year two.

In these cases Disability Advisors must contact us to get approval and provide good reasons and supporting evidence.

Case study

Student A is in the second year of a 4 year HND. He has to go into hospital part way through the academic year for an operation and knows that due to the recuperation period he will only be able to complete 30% of his course that year instead of 50%. However, he is confident that he will be able to make up the remaining time over the final two years of his course.

Their disability advisor puts a case to us with supporting evidence from the student's doctor and academic advisor. We exceptionally agree to fund the student as the length of their course will not be extended beyond the original 4 years. [Back to Index](#) [Return to part-time study index](#)

Paying DSA

Equipment **NMPH**

Equipment

We pay the DSA directly into the student's nominated bank account. From session 2012/13 due to a change in Scottish Government Policy we can no longer make DSA payments by cheque. Students must therefore hold a valid current or savings account when they apply for support.

In exceptional circumstances we can pay a student's DSA into a 3rd party account e.g. in cases where a student is unable to undertake their own financial transaction and a family member has power of attorney for them (evidence must be provided).

If a student does not have access to a bank account and is unable to open one please contact us for advice.

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NMPH

We pay the DSA directly into the student's nominated bank account. From session 2012/13 due to a change in Scottish Government Policy we can no longer make DSA payments by cheque. Students must therefore hold a valid current or savings account when they apply for support.

In exceptional circumstances we can pay a student's DSA into a 3rd party account e.g. in cases where a student is unable to undertake their own financial transaction and a family member has power of attorney for them (evidence must be provided).

If a student does not have access to a bank account and is unable to open one please contact us for advice.

Payment is normally made monthly in arrears on receipt of a fully completed invoice, however, we can pay invoices more frequently in exceptional circumstances. In these cases we would require supporting evidence to explain why this was required.

Where NMPH is not being provided by a registered service provider e.g. an institution or taxi company, students must use our DSA claim form. The invoice must be signed by both the student and their helper.

If there is any dispute with the invoice e.g. the invoice covers more hours than we agreed, we will not settle the invoice until the dispute has been resolved.

We aim to pay all fully completed NMPH claims within 21 days or receipt.

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PCs, laptops and Macs

We can pay for the cost of a laptop or computer as appropriate, however, there should be a clear and detailed explanation provided on a student's needs assessment form as to why the student may require a desk top computer or a laptop. The explanation should also clarify why the student cannot reasonably access a computer which may be in their own home or available within their own institution.

When making a decision on whether to award funding for a laptop or desktop PC the decision should be based purely on the most appropriate piece of equipment for the student's disability and not because a student has expressed a preference for one piece of equipment over another.

The needs assessment form should also detail evidence that a student has had the opportunity to trial equipment before purchase and information relating to the insurance costs of the items.

Case Study

Student A has mild dyslexia and has difficulties with handwriting and spelling. It is recommended that he has a scribe during exams and that he use a computer to produce his essays and coursework. As the university provides laptops with dyslexia software for students to use on campus, and as the student will have no difficulty using these PCs or accessing them for the required length of time, no computer equipment is recommended for him.

We will not normally pay for a Mac computer instead of a PC unless there are strong disability related reasons for doing so. When recommending a Mac needs assessors should make it clear in the assessment report why a PC would not be suitable.

We will not pay for a Mac computer simply because the student prefers Macs or has more experience using them.

If a student wants to purchase a Mac and pay the difference themselves we will need confirmation from their disability advisor that the Mac is suitable for their needs and can run all of the assistive software that they have been recommended. If the assistive software required for the Mac is more expensive than the PC version the student will have to pay the difference in cost for that too.

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Placements

Students who undertake a placement as part of their course (regardless of whether the placement is paid, unpaid, voluntary, compulsory, full year or part year) can claim DSA.

However, we will not pay for anything that their placement providers could reasonably be expected to provide under the Equality Act e.g. special chairs or IT equipment.

Students who are on paid placements may be entitled to support through the Government's Access to Work scheme and they should apply to this first before they apply for DSA. If they are not eligible for support from this scheme they must provide us with written confirmation of this before we can consider support.

More information about this scheme can be found on the YouGov website -

http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/Employmentsupport/WorkSchemesAndProgrammes/DG_4000347

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Portable Digital Devices (PDDs)

We can pay for the cost of PDDs (including Blackberrys, Smart Phones, iPhones and iPads) under the DSA, however, we must have clear evidence that the student cannot use alternatives such as paper diaries or Filofaxes or the calendar and notes functions on their own mobile phone.

We will not normally pay for a PDD for a student if we are also providing them with a laptop. In cases where a student requires both a claim must be made under the exceptional cases process.

When paying for a PDD we will only pay for the most basic suitable model and we would expect the student to use the PDD for course related study only.

We will not pay for the cost of a student to upgrade their own phone to a PDD as the PDD should only be used by the student for study purposes.

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Portable Digital Devices (PDDs) – Applications (apps)

When submitting an assessment that includes apps you must list each app individually on the form along with:

- the price of the app
- an explanation of the function of the app
- confirmation that the app does not replicate any functionality the student has on an existing piece of equipment (if the student already has this functionality on another device a claim must be made under the exceptional cases process)

We will not process a claim for apps where the student is recommended a general amount to cover apps or the apps are not clearly listed in the format above.

We will not pay for apps in the following circumstances:

- Apps that duplicate features that are available on another piece of DSA equipment owned by the student e.g. a recording app for a student who owns a digital recorder or an app that replicates functions the student can carry out on their laptop
- Subject specific apps e.g. medical or legal dictionaries
- Apps that institutions make available to all their students or recommend all their students to purchase

- Apps that simply provide a different version of a function that a student already has on their PDA e.g. we will not pay for a notes or organiser app if their phone or PDA already has one installed on it
- Apps that are not study related e.g. maps of local areas, travel information etc

We will not normally pay for any training on how to use apps.

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Priority applications

We aim to process DSA applications (providing we have all the necessary supporting documents) within 21 days of receipt.

However, there may be exceptional cases where the student requires their application for support to be approved more quickly. For these types of cases we operate a priority application system. To treat an application as a priority, along with the DSA form and supporting documents, Disability Advisors must provide the following:

- A completed Priority Form giving clear supporting evidence to show why the application should be treated as a priority.

The priority form should not be used for students who require a referral to an Access Centre as we already prioritise these applications.

We keep a record of all priority applications received to ensure that the system is being used fairly.

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Prisoners

Prisoners are not eligible to claim DSA. The only support they are entitled to claim from us is payment of their tuition fees (where appropriate).

Each prison has its own education budget and prisoners requiring additional disability related support should apply to that for help.

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Reasonable Adjustments

The purpose of the DSA is to remove any disadvantages a student may have when undertaking their course because of the effect of their impairment. In other words the DSA is there to help address the needs of the student which arise from the inaccessible elements of their course, such as providing specialist equipment, and non medical personal help.

The Equality Act, which came into force in 2011, places a specific duty on colleges and universities to develop and implement a Disability Equality Scheme. The purpose of this scheme is to narrow the gap between the outcomes and experiences of disabled and non-disabled people. An institution's scheme should include an action plan, arrangements for monitoring progress and an impact assessment. Institutions will have a duty to report annually on the scheme's progress and to review it every three years. The process requires active engagement with and involvement of disabled people in its development and review.

It is expected that institutions should continually anticipate the general requirements of disabled people with a wide range of impairments and health conditions rather than simply waiting until a disabled person requests an adjustment.

If we feel that any part of a DSA claim is something that should be considered as a 'reasonable adjustment' for an institution then we may refuse that element of support.

Case Study

Student A has Bi Polar Disorder and is undertaking a BA in History. Despite her institution having fully accessible library facilities and specialist IT equipment within the library she avoids using it because she finds it too noisy and there not any private spaces available. Student A applies to the DSA to purchase reference books she needs for research because she cannot enter the university library to access them.

We refuse support for this on the grounds that we would expect the institution to make alternative arrangements to support the student i.e. allow her to borrow the text books on a short term loan so she can read them at home or provide a quiet room in the institution for students to use.

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Reformatting/transcription costs

We will not pay for the cost of reformatting or transcription (including production of material into Braille) of any documents, text books or journals.

If a student requires this service they should speak to the disability advisor at their institution to find out the best way of accessing this.

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Regulations

The payment of DSA is governed by the Students' Allowances (Scotland) Regulations 2007. A copy can be found on our website at http://www.saas.gov.uk/student_support/legislation.htm

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Repeating a period of study

We can pay DSA for students who have to repeat a period of study providing they are studying for at least 50% of the length of the full year.

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Response times

We have the following response times and processing targets:

DSA forms

- Process all fully completed DSA application forms within 21 calendar days
- Refer all students requiring a needs assessment to their nearest Access Centre straight away

- Notify all students who have incorrectly completed their DSA form or who we require further straight away
- Process all fully completed needs assessment reports within 21 calendar days

Written correspondence and emails

- Respond to all DSA written correspondence within 21 calendar days
- Respond to all emails within 15 calendar days
- Pay all invoices for NMPH within 21 calendar days

Other

- Deal with any requests under Freedom of information (FOI) within 20 working days
- Respond to all complaints within 10 working days
- Respond to all appeals within 5 working days

If students do not receive a reply from us within 28 calendar days they should contact us to ensure that we have received their form or correspondence.

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Retrospective claims

We will not reimburse students for any items of equipment that they buy prior to a diagnosis of disability and/or a needs assessment being carried out.

If a student has to wait for an appointment for a needs assessment their institution may be able to loan them equipment or provide them with additional support until receive their allowance from us.

Where there is a long waiting list for an assessment and an institution decides to provide NMPH to a student in the meantime, we can reimburse the cost of the NMPH they receive provided that it is recommended in the needs assessment and the amount of NMPH that they received was not more or of a higher cost to the support recommended in their assessment.

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Scotopic Sensitivity

We will only offer support to students with a Scotopic sensitivity/Merles Irlen syndrome or a visual disability/visual disturbance if the initial diagnosis is carried out by a suitably qualified optician/optometrists or equivalent medically qualified eye specialist.

This is the same for the discretionary funds, the funds can only be used to pay for a diagnosis of any visual disability if the diagnosis has been carried out by a qualified optician/eye doctor.

Glasgow Caledonian University have a specialised eye clinic that carries out test and diagnosis of visual stress conditions and this can be paid for under the discretionary funds and be accepted as a diagnosis of a disability/medical condition.

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Special Dietary Needs

We can pay a maximum of £23.95 per week to for extra dietary costs incurred as a result of their disability. We can only consider payment if the student incurs extra costs as a result of undertaking a course of study. If they would normally incur these costs regardless of their attendance at college or university if then will not pay for their extra food related costs. In these circumstances we would expect Social Services or the NHS to help the student meet the cost.

If eligible, the cost of special dietary needs is paid out of the small items allowance.

In order to claim special dietary needs a student must provide the following:

- A letter from their doctor or dietician confirming that they require a special diet as a result of their disability and their attendance on their course and which confirms what special items they need
- A letter from the student with an estimate of their weekly food costs broken down into standard items and those that are required only as a result of their disability

We will not pay for the following:

- Items that the student can get on prescription i.e. gluten free bread
- Dietary supplements e.g. protein shakes

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Study Abroad

Students who study abroad for part of their course whether on a voluntary or compulsory continue to be eligible for DSA support.

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Study Skills Support

The aim of this support is to maximise a students' ability and remove any barriers caused by their impairment.

We can pay for individual study skills support for students with specific learning difficulties or other conditions which may impact on a person's ability to study e.g. certain mental health conditions.

Generally study skills support consists of a number of sessions designed to help students plan and organise their work, develop study skills and exam revision techniques and become more confident using resources such as libraries and the internet for course work purposes. However, the exact content should be tailored specifically to each individual's unique learning requirements. When recommending study skills support assessors or Disability Advisors should make it clear exactly what kind of support will be given and how the student will benefit.

Such support should, over a period of time, impart generic skills which together with any specialist equipment that has been provided, allow the student to become an independent learner. As such we would expect study skills to be awarded for a set period of e.g. 10 - 30 weeks and then reviewed at the end of that period to see if any further support is required. Although we do not have a set limit on the amount of study skills support that we will pay for we would expect that over time the amount of support a student requires will decrease significantly as they learn to put their newly acquired skills into practice.

If there is no change or reduction to the level of support recommended year on year we will require a letter from the student's disability advisor explaining why the student still requires a high level of support and what the continuing study support sessions will entail.

We will only pay for study skills support where the student is not able to access any general study skills support available through their institutions e.g. if these classes do not take into account different learning skills and methods of acquiring information.

We will only pay for study skills support carried out by suitably qualified individuals. The rate charged for study skills can vary, however, we would expect the rate to be in the region of £15 - £45 per hour.

Case Study 1

Student B has asperger syndrome and is studying for a BA in Law. In her first year her needs assessment report recommends that she be awarded study skills support for two hours per week as she experiences a lot of difficulties with timetabling, interpreting essay questions and structuring course work.

Although the student makes good progress and her planning and organising skills improve she still requires a lot of ongoing support. When she applies for DSA in second year her disability advisors sends in a covering letter explaining that her study support has been reviewed but due to the level of her difficulties she still requires support for 1 hour per week. The letter also confirms that her support will be reassessed again at the end of second year.

Case Study 2

Student A has mild dyslexia and is starting a BA Business course. In the first year his needs assessment report recommends that he be awarded study skills support for two hours per week as he experiences difficulties planning essays and organising revision time. In the assessment report it states that one of the aims of the study skills class is to enable him to develop the skills to become an independent learner.

As he becomes familiar with planning and organising methods and is able take on board the strategies developed in his study skills classes he finds that he needs less support and is able to successfully put what he has learned into practice.

As result the amount of study skills he requires decreases to 1 hour a fortnight in second year and then is further reduced to 1 hour a term in third and forth year.

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Summer Schools

We can pay for disability related travel costs and NMPH for distance learning students attending Summer Schools.

Travel and NMPH is assessed and paid for under the normal rules governing this support, see the section: [Travel – OU and distance learning students](#) and [Allowances – NMPH](#) for more information.

In cases where students require overnight stays we can only pay for support during class hours. If the student requires any additional help or support outwith these times e.g. help with evening meals or getting dressed in the mornings these costs should fall to social services.

Payment will only be paid in arrears and students must provide the following:

- A completed Summer School attendance form

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Summer Transition programmes

There is no funding available from us for students attending summer transition programmes (e.g. the transition programme for Autistic Spectrum students run by some institutions) as these courses are not a compulsory part of the student's degree. Student's attending these courses may be eligible for support from their institution's discretionary funds.

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Temporary disability or illness

We will not normally pay DSA for students who have a short term disability or illness e.g. a broken arm.

Where there is evidence that although temporary in nature a student's disability or illness is going to last for a significant proportion of their studies then we can consider paying DSA on an individual basis under the exceptional cases rules, see the section – [Exceptions](#) for more information.

Case study 1

Student A is in year two of a four year BA. She breaks her leg and is expected to be in a plaster cast for 6 weeks. Whilst in plaster she experiences mobility difficulties and is unable to walk the 10 minutes to her nearest bus stop and so needs to take taxis to university instead.

As the disability is temporary in nature she is not eligible to apply for the DSA. However, she can apply to her university Discretionary Funds for money to cover the costs of her taxis.

Case study 2

Student B is in year one of a two year HND course and is involved in a road traffic accident. As a result of his injuries he is temporarily confined to a wheelchair. Although expected to make a fully recovery he submits evidence from his physiotherapist that confirms that it will be at least 18 months before he regains full mobility.

We agree to pay DSA on the basis that although temporary, the nature of the student's injury is such that it will have a significant impact on his ability to study throughout the duration of his course.

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Tinted Lenses

We can pay for the cost of tinted lenses providing:

- the lenses have been recommended by a fully qualified optician/optometrist or medically qualified eye specialist
- the student is required to wear tinted glasses solely for study purposes and does not require them for other purposes e.g. reading newspapers or books for leisure, driving etc.

In addition we will also pay for a basic set of lenses and the cheapest frame available. If a student wants a more expensive frame or a special type of lens e.g. ultra thin they will have to pay the additional cost themselves.

As a guide a basic pair of single vision lenses and frames costs between £30 and £40, therefore, we will query any claims above this amount.

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Travel

We do not normally pay travel expenses for students attending college or university.

However, some students because of their disability may be unable to use public transport e.g. students with visual or mobility difficulties. In these cases we can consider payment of travel by private car or taxi.

Travel

Attending a needs assessment

Car

Nursing and Midwifery Bursary Students (NMSB)

OU and distance learning students

Taxis

Travel

We will normally only pay for travel for one single return journey per day between a student's home and institution during term time. However, we can consider paying for travel outwith term time in certain circumstances for example:

- If a student has to attend their institution for resits
- If a student has to come in to their institution to meet with their course tutor

In these cases we would require a letter from their disability advisor confirming the reason for the outwith term time travel.

We can pay travel costs for students on voluntary and compulsory placements and for students studying a voluntary or compulsory period abroad subject to all the normal travel rules.

There is no maximum limit to the amount that we can pay for disability related travel costs. However, in cases where the amounts claimed are extremely high we would require information on why alternatives such as staying in term time accommodation were not appropriate. There may also be a case for travel costs being covered by the student's local authority. Partnership Matters provides guidance on this matter and on issues relating to Motability allowances, see the section - [Partnership Matters](#) on for more information.

We cannot pay for travel by taxis or car under the DSA for disabled students who experience travel problems simply because they live in a rural location or have difficulty accessing public transport due to poor service in their area.

Where a student, as a result of their disability needs to use both public and private transport we will only pay for the private transport element.

Case study 1

Student A has mobility difficulties. To travel to college he gets a train from his home to the city centre, however, there is no public transport available from the train station to the college. As the journey is uphill and over uneven terrain his disability means that he is unable to manage the journey. He therefore, gets taxis from the train station to his college.

As he needs to use taxis because of his disability we will reimburse the cost under DSA. We will not pay for the cost of his train journey, however, as this journey is not a result of his disability.

Travel Element

We will deduct a travel element of £159 (£82 from students on Allied Health Profession (AHP) courses) from most DSA travel claims. We do this because this is the amount that students are expected to pay from their student loan, grant or bursary.

We do not deduct a travel element from the following students:

- Part-time and distance learning students
- Students over the age of 59 who are undertaking an undergraduate Loan Bearing course
- Students on postgraduate courses (unless they are doing a teacher training or Architecture course)
- Nursing and midwifery students

This is because these students are not eligible for student loans to help with their living costs.

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Attending a needs assessment

We cannot reimburse any travel costs a student might incur attending a needs assessment. Students may be eligible to apply to their institutions discretionary funds for help towards these costs.

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Car

If a student has to travel by car because of their disability they must provide the following:

- A letter from their doctor that confirms that as a direct result of their disability they are unable to use public transport
- A written estimate **from the student** confirming:
 - The number of miles between their home and institution,
 - The number of journeys that they make per week
 - The number of weeks they are claiming for
 - The cost of the journey per mile
 - The total cost of travel claimed

The maximum mileage rate that we will pay is 40p per mile. This is based on the highest range of the AA motoring costs and includes an element for wear and tear on the car. However, students should not claim this amount automatically, instead they should work out the actual mileage rate and use that for their claim. We will restrict any claims that we deem to be excessive.

When trying to work out their mileage rate students might find the following link helpful http://www.theaa.com/motoring_advice/running_costs/index.html

We will not pay for:

- The cost of a car or equivalent vehicle if the student does not already own one
- Insurance or MOT
- Driving lessons
- Repairs
- Any fines or parking tickets that a student incurs whilst travelling to their institution

If a student is unable to drive themselves and is instead getting help from a parent or partner we can pay for the mileage rate for two return journeys between the home and institutions if the parent or partner returns home in between journeys.

We cannot pay travel by car under the DSA for disabled students who experience travel problems simply because they live in a rural location, have difficulty accessing public transport due to poor service in their area or who find it hard to pay for travel because of financial constraints.

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Nursing and Midwifery Bursary Students (NMSB)

The normal DSA travel rules apply: as well as paying travel between their home and term time address we can also pay for travel between their home and any clinical placements they have to attend.

We cannot pay travel under the DSA for disabled students who experience travel problems simply because they live in a rural location, have difficulty accessing public transport due to poor service in their area or who find it hard to pay for travel because of financial constraints.

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OU and distance learning students

We can pay for the cost of travel between the student's home address and institution if they attend any compulsory tutorials or summer schools or voluntary tutorials that are directly related to their course of study.

To be eligible for support students must provide the following:

- A letter from their doctor that confirms that as a direct result of their disability they are unable to use public transport
- At least two quotes from registered taxi companies for the cost of a single journey between their home and institution if they are travelling by taxi A written estimate of the number of miles between their home and institution and the cost of the journey per mile if they are travelling by car (see section: Travel – [car](#) for more information)
- A 3rd party agreement form if they wish us to pay the taxi company direct
- Receipts or invoices for all taxi journeys undertaken
- A signed form from their tutor for any voluntary tutorials that they attended

We cannot pay travel under the DSA for disabled students who experience travel problems simply because they live in a rural location, have difficulty accessing public transport due to poor service in their area or who find it hard to pay for travel because of financial constraints.

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Taxis

If students have to travel by taxi they must provide the following:

- A letter from their doctor that confirms that as a direct result of their disability they are unable to use public transport
- At least two quotes from fully registered taxi companies for the cost of one single journey between their home and institution or place of work, if they are on a course related placement
- A 3rd party payment form if they wish us to pay the taxi company direct

- Copies of receipts or a weekly or monthly invoice for all journeys undertaken

We will not normally:

- Reimburse the cost of any taxi journeys without appropriate receipts or invoices
- Pay for more than one return taxi trip per day
- Pay for taxis to and from places other than the institution or placement location
- Pay for taxi journeys outwith term time

We cannot pay travel by taxi under the DSA for disabled students who experience travel problems simply because they live in a rural location, have difficulty accessing public transport due to poor service in their area or who find it hard to pay for travel because of financial constraints.

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Voluntary Tutorials

We can pay for disability related travel costs and NMPH for distance learning students who attend voluntary tutorials providing the costs are directly related to their course of study.

Travel and NMPH is assessed and paid for under the normal rules governing this support, see the sections – [travel](#) and – Allowances – [NMPH](#) for more information.

In cases where students require overnight stays we can only pay for support during class hours. If the student requires any additional help or support outwith these times e.g. help with evening meals or getting dressed in the mornings these costs should fall to social services.

We will only make pay for support in arrears and students must provide the following:

- A completed Voluntary tutorial attendance form

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Withdrawal from course

If a student withdraws from their course we may seek to recover some or all of the money paid out. It will depend on at what point they withdraw from their course and whether or not they have received money for support or equipment that they have not already bought or received.

We will not normally ask students to repay money for equipment that they have purchased and been using prior to their withdrawal.

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SCHEDULE OF INFORMATION PROVIDED

Document Number	Document Type	Subject
1	External guidance – available online on SAAS website	SAAS: Part-Time Fee Grant (PTFG) Notes 2017-2018
2	External guidance - issued by SAAS to training providers	SAAS: Operating Rules for the Part-Time Fee Grant 2017-2018
3	Internal guidance	SAAS: General Instructions – Part Time Fee Grant (PTFG)
4	External guidance – available online on SAAS website	SAAS: Notes for the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) application 2017-2018
5	Internal guidance	SAAS: General Instructions – Disabled Student Allowance (DSA)