

Application for a Disabled Students' Allowance

For disabled OU students (living in England, Wales and Northern Ireland) studying part-time towards a qualification of at least 60 credits

Please apply as early as possible as it can take up to three months from application to delivery of equipment and services.

How to fill in this form:

- The questions you need to answer are on the right hand pages as you go through the form. Please read all the guidance notes before you answer the questions.
- Follow the instructions carefully. Only skip questions if the application form tells you to do so.
- You must submit **all** the required supporting evidence with your application form. **Do not send it separately.**
- Your eligibility for a DSA cannot be confirmed until you have provided all the information and evidence we require. Your application will be returned to you if the information you provide is inaccurate or incomplete. This will delay your application.
- There are useful Frequently Asked Questions on pages 21 to 27. You may wish to read these before completing the application form.
- If it is difficult for you to write by hand please ask someone else (e.g. friend, relative, partner) to fill it in but make sure the answers are your own. If you can't sign the form yourself, Section F (page 19) tells you what to do.
- This booklet and the accompanying letter are available online, in electronic format, in Braille and in audio format. Please contact the DSA Office if you need it in any of these formats.

The OU DSA Office in Milton Keynes will administer your DSA. **Please contact us if you need help with your application.**

The address for correspondence is:

The DSA Office	Voice Telephone	01908 654136
The Open University	Fax	01908 659956
Milton Keynes	Email	DSA-Queries@open.ac.uk
MK7 6BR		

Help with your application form

- **Staff in the DSA Office can help if you have any questions or if you need help completing the application form. Our contact details are at the bottom of page 1.**
- If you have difficulty writing, you may wish to ask a friend or relative to help but make sure the answers are your own. If you can't sign the form yourself, Section F (page 19) tells you what to do.
- Please refer to the notes on the left hand pages as you are filling in the form.
- Please provide all the information and evidence requested and answer each question accurately.
- **All applicants are required to provide documentary evidence of their identity, their residency and their disability. Please make sure yours is attached to the completed application form when you send it to us.**
- This application form is available online, in Braille and in audio format. Please contact us if you require either of these.
- **Pay careful attention to requests for supporting documentation. Failure to provide the correct paperwork will result in your form being returned to you.**

SECTION A Your personal details

Questions 1 to 3

Please provide a response to all the questions the form asks you to answer.

Don't leave any questions unanswered unless the form specifically asks you to skip them. If you do not provide all the information and evidence the form asks for, your form will be returned to you.

You must provide your normal home postcode, not a postcode that you use solely for OU correspondence or for other purposes. We may ask for proof that you live there.

Application form for a Disabled Students' Allowance

- Please read the notes on the left hand page (opposite) before completing the application form.
- Please complete the form using **BLOCK CAPITALS** and **black ink**.
- If you do not complete the form correctly and in full, it will be returned to you.
- If you do not enclose the required evidence with your application form, the form will be returned to you.
- Please continue on a separate sheet if you run out of space in answering any question.
- **Staff in the DSA Office can help if you have any questions or if you need help with the application form.** Our contact details are at the bottom of page 1.

SECTION A Your personal details

1 OU Personal Identifier (PI)

2 Title

First names

Surname

Any other name(s) which you have been known by

3 Postcode

SECTION B Your OU qualification

Question 4

To be eligible for a DSA you must be studying towards a specific OU qualification of at least 60 credits. **If you are not studying towards a qualification like this you are not eligible for a DSA.**

Question 5

DSA can only support study towards one qualification at a time so you should answer this question carefully and in full. If you are not sure of the full title of your qualification (or whether it is undergraduate or postgraduate) you should contact your regional or national centre for advice. Your OU student record must show you are registered for your chosen qualification and module/s in order for us to process your DSA application.

Do not simply state your current module/s. DSA is not unlimited and is only awarded to those disabled students who are studying towards an eligible qualification which can be achieved within a set timescale.

Please be aware that the following may significantly affect your future entitlement to DSA support:

- Withdrawing from a module of study
- Taking 'interrupted study'
- Changing to a different module of study
- Changing to a different qualification

If you consider any of the above actions after you have applied for (or have been awarded) a DSA, you must contact the DSA Office for advice as soon as possible. Failure to do so could result in an overpayment. You might also become responsible for any outstanding payments owed to helpers and/or suppliers.

Questions 6 and 7

Your level of study will affect the maximum amount of funding DSA can provide.

Question 8

Please enter all the OU modules you are registered for which start between 1st September and 31st August. Your OU student record must show these modules are linked to your chosen qualification. DSA will only support the modules which count towards the qualification named on this application form. Please contact your regional or national centre if you need help.

SECTION B Your OU qualification

4 Are you studying for an OU qualification of at least 60 credits?

Yes Please continue to question 5.

No **You are not eligible for a DSA.** Please contact your national or regional centre to enquire about alternative sources of funding.

5 Please state the OU qualification code, the full title of the qualification and the number of credits required to achieve it.

For example: B07 BSc (Hons) Psychology 360
 Q05 Bachelor of Laws (Hons) 360

Qualification Code	Qualification Title	Credits

6 Is your qualification undergraduate or postgraduate?

Undergraduate Please continue to question 7.

Postgraduate Please continue to question 7.

7 Please enter the number of years over which you are intending to study your qualification.

years

8 Please list below all the OU modules (one module code to a box) you are registered for which start in this academic year (between 1st September and 31st August).

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

If you are only reserved on your modules at this stage, please register in full as soon as possible as this will help us to process your DSA application.

SECTION C Other study and financial support

Question 9

You can have financial support for only one course of higher education at a time.

If you answer 'yes' to this question, please give us details and we'll get in touch with you to clarify your position.

Questions 10 and 11

If you have applied for financial support before, you will need to tell us about it.

If you don't tell us about any previous loans, applications, arrears or overpayments, your DSA application may be delayed or refused.

If you have any questions about support you've received from the Student Loans Company in the past, please contact them for advice on 0845 073 8895.

SECTION C Other study and financial support

- 9** Have you applied for a DSA for higher education study at a different university or college in the UK which starts in this academic year (between 1st September and 31st August)?

Yes Name of module and university/college where you applied to study

Name, address and telephone number of DSA awarding body

No

- 10** Have you applied for, or are you eligible to receive, a bursary or award from the National Health Service, Department of Health or Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (Northern Ireland) for a module of study in this academic year (between 1st September and 31st August)?

Yes Name, address and telephone number of awarding body

No

- 11 (a)** Are you behind with repayments or have you received overpayments of any loan you have previously had from the Student Loans Company?

Yes Please continue to question 11 (b).

No Please continue to question 11 (b).

- (b)** Was the loan received when you were under 18 years of age?

Yes Please continue to question 11 (c).

No Please go straight to question 12.

- (c)** If 'Yes', have you signed a credit agreement for all of them?

Yes Please continue to question 12.

No Please continue to question 12.

SECTION D Residence



Questions 12 to 14

All students MUST provide a photocopy of their birth certificate or passport which is fully certified by a person who falls into one of the categories below. This allows us to verify your date of birth and place of birth. If you are asked to provide any other residency documents these must also be properly certified. Please note: we cannot accept a driving licence as proof of identity or residency because this document does not confirm your place of birth.

These are the ONLY people who can certify the copy of your birth certificate or passport (and other residency documents) in connection with a DSA application.

- consular official
- minister of religion
- medical doctor
- lawyer
- permanent civil servant
- teacher (active or retired)
- police officer (active or retired)
- local government official
- social worker
- prison officer
- probation officer
- justice of the peace
- commissioned officer of the armed services (active or retired)

You do not need to know the person who is certifying your photocopies but they **MUST** belong to one of the categories shown above. You are asking them to verify that they have seen the original documents and that the photocopy you have taken is a true copy of the original.

The following MUST be written by the certifier on the photocopy of your original document. This should be on the same side as your document copy, or if space is insufficient, on the reverse:

- *“I confirm that this is a true copy of the original document”*
- Name and address of certifier
- Category of certifier (see above)
- Date
- Full contact address and phone number (or company stamp)

Alternatively, you may go to your regional or national centre with your **completed** application form and **original** documents, where staff will confirm they have seen appropriate evidence and forward your application on to the DSA Office. **Please contact your regional or national centre for times when this service will be available before visiting.** If neither option is suitable, please contact the DSA Office for advice. Our details are on page 1.

Please do not send us original documents as we cannot accept responsibility for loss or damage.

For further help about providing the correct documentation to confirm your identity, please see our leaflet ‘Help for first-time financial support applicants’. You can download this at: www.open.ac.uk/courses/proving-your-residency.pdf.

SECTION D Residence

You MUST supply a certified photocopy of your birth certificate or passport. If you do not, your application will be returned to you. See notes on opposite page. All students must provide this evidence, even UK nationals.

Please tick the box that applies to you before you continue:

I enclose a fully certified photocopy of my birth certificate or passport.



I have already submitted a certified photocopy of my birth certificate or passport to the OU Financial Support Office.

12 Where were you born? These details must match your certified evidence.

Place of birth (e.g. town)

Country of birth

13 Are you a UK national?

Yes

Please attach the required evidence (see question 12 above) then go straight to question 23.



No

Please continue to question 14.

14 Are you an EU national?

Yes

Please attach the required evidence (see question 12 above) then go straight to question 17.



No

Please continue to question 15.

15 Are you the child of a Swiss national?

Yes

Please attach the required evidence (see notes on page 10) then go straight to question 22.



No

Please continue to question 16.

16 Are you the child of a Turkish worker in the UK?

Yes

Please attach the required evidence (see notes on page 10) then go straight to question 22.



No

Please continue to question 17.

Section D Residence



Question 15

If you answer 'yes' to this question, you must provide a certified copy of your parent's passport or national identity card (if it shows their Swiss nationality and your relationship to them).



Question 16

If you answer 'yes' to this question, you must provide a certified copy of your parent's passport and a certified copy of your parent's P60 or a letter from their employer.



Question 17

If you are an EEA or Swiss national who is currently employed in the UK, you will need to provide a certified copy of one of the following for every year you apply for DSA:

- a current P60 or a letter from your employer
- if self employed, audited accounts, tax returns or details of income
- a letter from your employer confirming the intention to continue working while studying
- a P45, P60 or a letter from your previous employer.

If it is your relative who is working or, has worked in the UK, then they will need to provide the relevant evidence rather than you. If your child, or son- or daughter-in-law is the worker, you must be dependent on them.

Question 18

This question is in relation to confirming residency only. DSAs are not means tested and your employment status is not taken into account for DSA funding.



Question 19

If you answer 'yes' to this question you will need to provide a certified copy of a letter or other document from the Home Office which confirms you have a right of 'permanent residence', 'indefinite leave to remain' or the 'right of abode' in the UK. Please note, 'British citizens' are 'permanent residents'. Further information about the right of permanent residence and other immigration issues can be obtained from the UK Border Agency at the Home Office at www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk.



Question 20

If you answer 'yes' to this question you will need to provide a certified copy of a letter or other document from the Home Office which confirms your immigration status and a certified copy of evidence to confirm your relationship to the person who has been granted refugee status.

SECTION D Residence

- 17** Are you or your husband, wife, civil partner, parents or a step-parent, child, son- or daughter-in-law or child's civil partner OR a parent, step-parent's spouse or civil partner a European Economic Area (EEA) national or Swiss national who is working or has worked in the UK?

Yes Please give details below, attach the required evidence (see notes opposite) and then continue to question 18.



No Go straight to question 19.

- 18** If you are currently working, are you going to continue working during your studies?

Yes Please give details below and then continue to question 22.

No Go straight to question 22.

- 19** Do you have “settled status” in the UK?

Yes Please give the date you received this status, attach the required evidence (see notes opposite) and then go straight to question 22.



No Please continue to question 20.

- 20** Have you, your husband, wife, civil partner, parent(s) OR a parent's husband, wife or civil partner been granted refugee status by the UK Government?

Yes Please give the date this status is due to expire, attach the required evidence (see notes opposite) then go straight to question 22.



No Please continue to question 21.

SECTION D Residence



Question 21

If you answer 'yes' to this question you will need to provide a certified copy of a letter or other document from the Home Office which confirms your immigration status and a certified copy of evidence to confirm your relationship to the person who has been granted humanitarian protection.

Question 22

All non-UK nationals must answer this question.


Question 23

All students must answer this question. The first day of the academic year of your module is decided by the period during which that module began. You can find it from the table below:

You began your module in the period	First day of the academic year of your module is
1st August to 31st December	1st September
1st January to 31st March	1st January
1st April to 30th June	1st April
1st July to 31st July	1st July

SECTION D Residence

- 21** Have you, your husband, wife, civil partner, parent(s) OR a parent's husband, wife or civil partner been granted Humanitarian Protection in the UK as a result of a failed asylum application?

Yes Please give the date this status is due to expire, attach the required evidence (see notes opposite) and then continue to question 22. 

No Please continue to question 22.

- 22** At any time since 1 September 2006 has either of your parents, step-parents, guardians, husband, wife, civil partner OR parent, step-parent's spouse or civil partner lived or worked outside the UK and Islands or in the case of an EU, EEA or Swiss national outside the EEA or Switzerland?

Yes Please give details below then continue to question 23.

Full address(es)	From and to dates	Why they were there
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<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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If you require further space to provide your answer, please give the details requested above on a separate piece of paper and enclose it with this form.

No Please continue to question 23.

- 23** In the three years before the start of the first academic year of your module, did you live outside the UK and Islands at any time?

Yes Please give details of your residence for three years before the start of the first academic year of your module then continue to question 24.

Full address(es)	From and to dates	Why you were there
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<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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If you require further space to provide your answer, please give the details requested above on a separate piece of paper and enclose it with this form.

No Please continue to question 24.

SECTION E Your disability

Questions 24 and 25

We understand that you may be reluctant to disclose details of your disability. However, if you want to apply for a DSA you will need to provide the information we ask for in this section. Please see page 28 for information on the Data Protection Act 1998. The term 'specific learning difficulty' refers to dyslexia, dyspraxia, attention deficit disorder (with or without hyperactivity), dyscalculia, etc.

Question 26

We cannot process your application without the following evidence:



Students with a physical or mental health disability: A recent letter from your GP or appropriate medical specialist that confirms you have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term (more than 12 months) adverse effect on your ability to carry out day-to-day activities. Ideally, the evidence should also briefly explain how you are affected by your disability. If a medical specialist is providing the evidence, their field of expertise must be relevant to your disability. **We cannot accept benefits letters or appointment letters because they do not usually show all the information we need.**



Blind or visually impaired students: Proof of registration as a blind or partially-sighted person from your Social Services Office



Students with a specific learning difficulty: A full diagnostic assessment report which meets DSA standards. **We cannot accept any other type of evidence of your specific learning difficulty.** The DSA Office has an advice sheet about how to obtain the evidence we need. Please contact us if you would like a copy. Our details are at the bottom of page 1.

We can only consider those conditions for which you have provided sufficient medical evidence. It is important that the evidence confirms all the conditions you have listed on your application form.

A DSA cannot be used to pay for the cost of obtaining medical evidence or diagnostic reports. The University itself may be able help with the costs. You should ask your regional or national centre for further information if you need help with these costs.

Question 27

Please give as much information as you can about your disability and how you think it might affect your OU studies. Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

SECTION E Your disability

24 Do you have a physical disability, sensory disability, mental health difficulty, specific learning difficulty or other disability which you think is likely to affect your OU studies?

Yes

You must provide documentary evidence (see notes on opposite page).



No

You are not eligible for a DSA. Please contact your regional centre to enquire about alternative sources of funding.

25 What is the nature of your disability? (tick all the boxes that apply to you)

Physical disability

Specific Learning Difficulty

Mental health difficulty

Other

26 Documentary evidence of your disability is essential if you want to be considered for a Disabled Students' Allowance. Please tick below the kind of evidence you are enclosing with this application (see notes opposite).

If suitable evidence is not enclosed, your application will be returned to you.

For a physical disability, sensory disability or mental health difficulty (see notes on opposite page):

A letter from your GP or appropriate qualified specialist (e.g. medical consultant) confirming the nature of your disability and how it might affect your studies



Proof of registration as a blind or partially-sighted person from your Social Services Office

For a specific learning disability, e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia, attention deficit disorder, dyscalculia etc. (see notes on opposite page):



A full diagnostic report carried out by a suitably qualified specialist after you reached the age of 16. **A screening test is not sufficient.**



27 Please describe your disability in more detail below and explain how you think it might affect your OU studies. This must match the medical evidence (see notes opposite).

SECTION E Your disability

Question 28

The DSA Office acts as the funding body or local authority for students of the OU so it is separate from the OU itself. If you answer 'yes' it will allow us to supply medical evidence to the OU, should they request it.

Question 29

We ask you this because we must avoid unnecessary expenditure. We need to know whether any specialist equipment already purchased for you with a previous DSA will meet your OU study needs.



Question 30

If you answer 'Yes', and you would like us to use the existing report, please make sure you enclose a copy. We cannot guarantee that we will be able to use your existing needs assessment report. However, if we are, adjustments will be made to reflect the nature of your OU study. If you have additional needs which you feel are not covered by your existing needs assessment report, you should enclose a note with this application form explaining the nature of your additional needs. If you are experiencing difficulties with any of the equipment funded by an earlier DSA, you should provide full details.

SECTION E Your disability

- 28** Do you consent to the DSA Office providing copies of your medical evidence to the OU Examinations section and/or to regional disability advisers if it is required as proof for any special examination arrangements? (This avoids you having to provide the same evidence twice.)

Yes

No

- 29** Have you had a Disabled Students' Allowance for specialist equipment before?

Yes

Please give below the name of the DSA awarding body, the date of the award, and details of the equipment bought with DSA money.

Awarding body

Date of award

Please provide full details of all specialist equipment purchased from a previous DSA. **This should include the date it was purchased and its current condition.** Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

No

Please go straight to section F (page 19).

- 30** Are you happy for us to use the Study Needs Assessment report undertaken at that time?

Yes

You must enclose a copy of the report.

No



SECTION F Your declaration

Please read the declaration on page 19 (opposite) carefully. If you agree to the declaration, please sign and date at the bottom. If you do not, your application cannot be considered.

You may like to use the checklist below to ensure your application can be processed without delay.

Have you:

- Completed every box in Section A? (page 3)
- Clearly stated the full details of the qualification and modules you want a DSA for? (page 5)
- Enclosed a copy of your birth certificate or passport which has been certified? **This is compulsory for all students who apply for a DSA.** (page 9)
- Enclosed certified copies of any other documents required under the residency section of the application form? (pages 8 to 13)
- Enclosed copies of the appropriate medical evidence which confirm the nature of your disability? **This is compulsory for all students who apply for a DSA.** (page 15)
- Enclosed a copy of your existing needs assessment report (if you want us to use it)? (page 17)
- Read, signed and dated the declaration in Section F? (page 19).

Pay careful attention to requests for supporting documentation. You cannot have a DSA unless we receive all the correct paperwork.

Please retain a photocopy of your application for your reference.

In your own interests, you may wish to send your application to the DSA Office by recorded delivery.

Please do not send original documents as we cannot accept responsibility for loss or damage.

Please send your completed application form and supporting evidence as soon as possible to:

The DSA Office
The Open University
Hammerwood Gate
Milton Keynes
MK7 6BR

Please make sure you detach the application form (odd numbered pages from 3 to 19) from this booklet. Send the detached pages and required documents to the DSA Office and keep the remaining pages for your own records.

SECTION F Your declaration

Please read the undertakings below carefully. If you are happy to abide by them, put your signature, name and the date in the appropriate boxes. We cannot deal with your application if you do not sign and date this declaration. If your disability makes it impossible for you to sign the form we will accept the signature of someone who has power of attorney to sign on your behalf. Please send a copy of the document granting power of attorney with this application.

I will:

- Inform the OU DSA Office immediately in writing of any change in my circumstances or study plans such as a change of address, a change in my disability (including improvement), a change in the modules I am taking, a decision to withdraw from a module or a decision to abandon my OU studies altogether.

I understand and accept:

- Any equipment I receive through a DSA must be used for my OU studies and the OU DSA Office is not responsible for paying any costs resulting from misuse, loss, theft or damage (the OU DSA Office can usually help with insurance costs).
- If a DSA paid to me or on my behalf is, for any reason, more than I am entitled to, I may have to repay the excess amount.
- If I lose my entitlement to DSA, and the DSA Office has made any payments to me that I am not entitled to, I will repay them as required.
- The OU DSA Office is separate from the OU itself. The information I provide to the DSA Office might not automatically be forwarded to the University. The OU will not automatically inform the OU DSA Office of changes to my study. I am responsible for doing this.
- If I give the OU DSA Office false information, or fail to give complete information, I may be prosecuted, my application will be cancelled, any future application may be rejected, and financial support may be withdrawn. The OU always refers suspected cases of fraud to the police.

I consent:

- To the OU DSA Office disclosing, only when necessary, information related to my DSA to a third party, such as an Assessment Centre or service provider, who need the information to assist the DSA Office in dealing with my application or award (please see page 28 for information on the Data Protection Act 1998).
- To the OU DSA Office ordering approved equipment and services on my behalf from the recommended suppliers and making DSA payments to those suppliers on my behalf.

I declare that the information I have given on this form and the attached documentation is complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Your signature

Your name

Date

Please tell us where you heard about Disabled Students' Allowances by ticking the relevant boxes below:

Printed publications

'Meeting your Needs' (1)

'Bridging the Gap' (2)

Other publication (3)

Please specify (if known)

Websites

The Open University website (4)

Other website (5)

Please specify (if known)

Letters or other communications from:

Our Student Registration & Enquiry Service (6)

The DSA Office (7)

Other (8)

Please specify (if known)

Your own enquiry to:

The DSA Office (9)

Your regional or national centre (10)

Other (11)

Please specify (if known)

Disabled Students' Allowances – Frequently asked questions

This section answers some of the questions students have about DSAs and may help you decide if you are eligible to apply for one. Please keep these pages for future reference.

What are Disabled Students' Allowances?

They are grants available to some disabled students in higher education who are studying towards a qualification of at least 60 credits. A DSA can help with the extra costs you are obliged to incur because of a disability, mental health condition or specific learning difficulty (e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia, attention deficit disorder, dyscalculia, etc). DSAs are not provided by the institution of study itself (i.e. The Open University). They are administered by the OU DSA Office which acts as local authority or funding body for students of the OU. The amount of support we provide depends on the type of extra help you need, not on your financial circumstances.

What do you mean by 'disabled'?

Students who have a physical disability, sensory disability, mental health difficulty or specific learning difficulty (e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, ADD, ADHD) could be eligible for a DSA.

Can every disabled student have a DSA?

No. Only those disabled students who meet all the eligibility criteria can receive a DSA. If you aren't eligible for a DSA you should contact your OU regional or national centre to discuss alternatives.

Are DSAs means tested? Do they depend on my income or the amount of savings I have?

No.

Will having a DSA affect my entitlement to state benefits?

No. DSAs are purely for the extra study costs you may have to pay because of your disability (for example, a helper at residential school) and have nothing to do with living costs. If you receive a DSA it will not affect any disability or other state benefits you are receiving. You can only use your DSA to fund disability-related study costs which we agree you are obliged to incur. You cannot use DSA funds for anything else.

Are there any age restrictions?

No. There are no restrictions for DSA but the OU itself may not allow very young students to register for study. Please contact your regional or national centre if you need further advice.

What if I am already an OU student?

You can apply for a DSA at any time during your studies – even if you have studied with the OU before or if you are part way through a module.

I'm not studying towards a particular qualification. Can I still have a DSA?

No. DSAs are only for students studying towards a qualification of at least 60 credits. However, the University itself may be able to offer some support if you are not studying towards a qualification of at least 60 credits. You should contact your regional or national centre for further advice.

Can module results affect my eligibility for a DSA?

Your results in one year might not affect your eligibility in the next year – even if you repeat a module you failed or withdrew from. However, your eligibility will be affected if it is clear that you are registering for modules but not actually studying them or are registering for modules which are not required to achieve your qualification or if, because of failure or withdrawal, you can't complete your qualification within the required timescale.

Can I have more than one DSA at a time?

You cannot, at any one time, have a DSA for more than one qualification. Please be aware that you cannot receive a DSA for study at more than one institution in the same academic year.

Are DSAs limited to a certain number of years of OU study?

IMPORTANT: Qualifications supported by DSA are limited to a maximum number of years of OU study. The maximum number of years of DSA support you can receive depends upon where you are ordinarily resident in the UK, which qualification you are studying and when you began studying towards the qualification.

- For students living in England who began studying towards their qualification before 1st September 2012 and all students living in **Wales and Northern Ireland**, you must complete your qualification in no more than twice the period it would take to complete a full-time equivalent
- For students living in England who started studying towards their qualification on or after 1st September 2012, you must complete your qualification in no more than four times the period it would take to complete a full-time equivalent.

You will be informed what your maximum timescale is when your DSA award is confirmed in writing.

Will I receive the maximum number of years of DSA support?

Not necessarily as you must be able to complete your qualification within your maximum timescale. For every new academic year of DSA support you apply for, an Awards Officer will check your academic progress to ensure you can complete your qualification within your time limit. If at any time during your studies it can be seen that it is no longer possible for you to complete your qualification within the time limit, a DSA will no longer be provided. The DSA Office has no discretion on the Government regulations which determine the administration of DSA.

Why do you ask about other study and financial support?

DSAs are grants from public funds. To be eligible for a DSA, you must not be behind with repayments or have received overpayments of any loan you have had from the Student Loans Company.

You must not have a bursary or award from the National Health Service, the Department of Health, or the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (Northern Ireland) for a module in this academic year.

What if I've already had a DSA in the past for study elsewhere?

That doesn't necessarily affect your right to apply for a DSA as a part-time OU student, although when we consider requests for equipment for OU study we will take into account any specialist equipment funded by a DSA for your previous studies. Please be aware that you cannot receive a DSA for study at more than one institution in the same academic year.

What are the rules regarding residency?

IMPORTANT: All students must submit evidence of their identity/residency, even if they are a UK national, so we can verify their date of birth and place of birth and that they are a permanent resident of the UK. This evidence must be 'certified' (more information on page 8).

Generally, you will meet the residence requirements if:

- on the first day of the first academic year of study towards your qualification, you are settled in the UK within the meaning of the Immigration Act 1971
- and**
- for the three years before that date you were ordinarily resident in the UK, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man, wholly or mainly for purposes other than receiving full-time education.

You are 'settled' in the UK if you are ordinarily resident and not subject under immigration law to any restriction on the length of your stay. A UK national or British citizen will automatically have settled status.

EU nationals who on the first day of the first academic year of study towards their qualification are ordinarily resident in the UK, and have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands throughout the three years before the start of their studies, may also qualify.

EEA and Swiss nationals who:

- have migrant worker status (or whose husband, wife, civil partner, parent or step-parent is a migrant worker)

and

- have been ordinarily resident in the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland throughout the three-year period immediately preceding the first day of the first academic year of study towards their qualification

and

- are ordinarily resident in the UK on the first day of the first academic year of study towards their qualification

may qualify.

If you've been absent from the UK in the last three years because you, or your husband, wife, civil partner, parent or guardians, were temporarily abroad, you may still qualify. Please give the appropriate details in Section D. Full details of the residency requirements are on the following website: www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance.

How do I prove I am a permanent resident of the UK?

If we require evidence of residence, the form will ask you for written evidence of settled status and that you live in the UK. Suitable evidence might be a certified copy of your passport, birth certificate, a letter from the Home Office, an original utility bill, a letter from your employer, or a bank or building society statement. If you were born outside the UK, written evidence is required by UK government regulations. **Please contact the DSA Office if you need guidance** (details on page 1).

What happens if I move to Scotland, Isle of Man or Channel Islands after I have been awarded a DSA?

We will continue to be responsible for dealing with DSA payments for your OU study needs, as long as you are still living in the UK or Islands on the first day of each subsequent OU module you take and are still eligible.

What happens if I move out of the UK after I have been awarded a DSA?

You must be resident in the UK or islands in order to be eligible for a DSA. If you are planning to move out of the UK you should contact the DSA Office for advice.

I understand I must tell the DSA Office about my disability in order to get a DSA. Must I tell The Open University too?

No. The DSA Office is separate from the OU's Disabled Student Services section so you don't have to tell the OU itself about your disability if you don't want to. However, we **strongly advise** that you do tell the OU, as there are many practical difficulties in arranging your support if you do not.

Why do you need evidence of my disability?

DSAs are grants from public funds. Although the OU itself does not ask you to provide evidence of your disability for most of its services, the Government requires you to do so for a DSA. The DSA Office is accountable to the Government for the proper management of DSA funds in accordance with the appropriate regulations.

Can DSA cover the cost of obtaining evidence of my disability?

No. You must meet this cost yourself, although the University may be able to help you if you are facing financial hardship. Please contact your OU regional or national centre to discuss possible sources of funding.

What can the DSA Office accept as evidence of my disability?

You must provide appropriate evidence for every disability you declare. The following text boxes show what we need:

For physical disability, sensory disability or mental health difficulty:

- a letter from your GP or appropriate qualified specialist confirming the nature of your disability and how your study will be affected by it.
- proof of registration as a blind or partially-sighted person from your Social Services Office.

For a specific learning disability (e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia, attention deficit disorder, dyscalculia etc.):

- a diagnostic assessment of a specific learning difficulty by a suitably qualified specialist. You'll find more information about this on page 14.

We cannot usually accept evidence of entitlement to disability state benefits such as the Disability Living Allowance, Severe Disablement Allowance or Incapacity Benefit as evidence of disability. This is because we need evidence which confirms the nature and extent of your disability. Most benefits letters and forms do not provide this essential information.

What can my DSA pay for?

DSA can pay for extra study-related costs you are obliged to incur due to your disability or specific learning difficulty. Some examples are:

- specialist equipment, for example, assistive software
- non-medical helper, for example, a note taker or reader
- extra travel costs you have to pay because of your disability
- other costs like extra printer ink or Braille paper.

Will my DSA cover all my OU support needs?

No. The University will make reasonable adjustments and can provide and pay for general support services such as study materials in alternative formats and physical access to teaching accommodation, examination centres and residential schools. A DSA gives you access to a wider range of support.

Your DSA can't be used to pay for additional academic tuition or the basic costs all students are obliged to incur, e.g. module fees, set books, internet access etc. However, if you are facing financial hardship you might be entitled to financial assistance from other sources. Please contact your OU regional or national centre for further information.

Your DSA can't be used to pay for those costs you would still have incurred even if you weren't studying or for costs unrelated to study, e.g. personal care.

What if I can't think of anything I need?

We would still advise you to apply for a DSA. You might be surprised by the range of equipment, software and services which can be funded by a DSA. You will have a chance to discuss what's available when you have your study needs assessment.

How does the DSA Office decide what my DSA will fund? What is a study needs assessment?

Once you are eligible for a DSA, we will ask an independent needs assessor to meet with you to discuss your disability-related study needs. This is called your study needs assessment. You will probably be asked to visit an Assessment Centre for this to take place (an assessor can come to your home if your disability prevents you from travelling) but it is not a medical examination. Your assessor will write your needs assessment report which contains recommendations for any study-related items and services that your assessor thinks you need. The report is sent to the DSA Office for an Awards Officer to review and decide which of the recommendations can be funded by your DSA. We will give you the decision in writing and you will have the opportunity to appeal if you do not agree with the decision made by the DSA Awards Officer.

How will services paid for from my DSA be provided?

The DSA Office can order specialist equipment for you and, in general, ensure that services paid for out of your DSA are delivered efficiently. We aren't technical specialists so if you have any difficulties you should raise them first with the service provider. If they aren't resolved satisfactorily, tell us and we will look into the matter for you. If you are awarded DSA support for non-medical help we will give you details of an agency who can assist you with finding a helper.

How will DSA payments be made?

We usually make direct payments to third parties who provide you with study equipment and services. We will need an invoice from a supplier or service provider, and some form of documentation from you and the University to show that you received the goods and services and attended the module activities for which study support was provided. If you pay for anything we have awarded (equipment, consumables, study-related travel and so on), you may claim reimbursement from the DSA Office. You must use a special claim form and provide full receipts.

What happens to equipment bought for me with DSAs?

If you use it for your OU studies it becomes your property to keep. If you do not commence your OU studies after you receive your equipment, we may ask you to return it or pay for it.

What happens if my study needs change?

We will review your existing needs assessment report in the light of your new circumstances and we may arrange for a new study needs assessment. This could happen if there is a change in your medical condition or disability, or if a new module has different demands. You may be required to submit further medical evidence and we will advise you if this is the case.

What happens if I withdraw from a module or take ‘Interrupted Study’?

You must tell us if you are considering this. We will cancel any DSA payments authorised but not yet made, and we cannot make any more payments for the year. If you withdraw early in your first year of study without good reason you may be required to repay any DSA payments made to you that you are not entitled to.

What happens if I take a break of a year or more from OU study?

You can apply for continued DSA support when you return to OU study. When calculating whether you will still be able to complete your qualification within your maximum timescale, we can usually disregard a year in which you have not registered for study. Your time limit may be affected by taking a break of more than one year. We will inform you how many years of DSA support you have remaining to achieve your qualification when you return to your OU studies. Your remaining time of support will be based on you making satisfactory academic progress.

Will I need to fill in another DSA application form as I progress through my studies?

DSA is awarded in connection with a whole qualification. However, continued DSA funding is not automatically awarded for every year of your studies. You won't need to complete a full DSA application each year but you will need to submit an application for 'Continued DSA Funding'. If you are eligible to receive continued DSA funding we will base the continued funding award on your existing needs assessment, making the appropriate adjustments as you progress through your studies. You should automatically receive an application for continued funding when you register for a new academic year of study. If you don't, you should contact the DSA Office as soon as possible.

How do I apply for a DSA?

You can apply at any time up until the end of your module, but the earlier you apply, the better.

Fill out this application form, carefully reading the guidance notes on the opposite pages. When you have completed the application form, send the odd numbered pages from 3 to 19 to us, along with all the required evidence.

Please make sure you keep the remaining pages for future evidence. For your own records, we strongly recommend you keep a photocopy of the pages and evidence you send.

Where can I find out more?

You are welcome to contact the DSA Office directly (details on page 1) or visit our website to find out more about DSAs. The website includes some short videos which you might find helpful when completing your application form.

www.open.ac.uk/disability/disabled-students-allowance.

Please keep this statement for future reference.

Data Protection Act 1998

The following statement describes who will use the information provided on this form and what they will use it for.

We will use the information you or your partner give on this form to process your DSA application. The Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills has transferred certain functions relating to your DSA application to The Open University. The Student Loans Company (SLC) also carries out certain functions on The Secretary of State's behalf.

The Open University needs the information you give on this form to work out whether you are eligible for support and assesses the maximum amount of support you are entitled to, and is the data controller for that information. The Open University will make the result of this assessment available to the SLC so that they know how much to pay you. The Open University will keep personal information about you so that we can audit the assessment of DSA. If you would like to see your information please contact the Open University's Data Protection Coordinator.

The Student Loans Company needs the information you give on this form to process your application for support and handle the payments and recovery as appropriate and is the data controller for this information. The SLC will have to keep personal information about you for these purposes. The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills is also a data controller for this information as it is responsible for it by law. However, if you would like to see your information please contact the SLC. The SLC may use your information to maintain or develop their systems.

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills may use the information you provided on this form to monitor the performance of the DSA system and to develop future policy. Any published statistical work will be anonymous and will not identify individuals.

The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and the **Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)** may use the information provided on this form. This information together with other information supplied by institutions will be analysed. The HEFCE and the HESA will not identify individuals in any published results.

By law The Open University and the SLC must protect the public funds they handle and may use the information you have provided on this form to prevent and detect fraud. They may also share the information, for the same purposes, with other organisations which handle public funds.



The Open University Student Services

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