



Open to your needs

“I would say to anybody, do it... with the OU it’s possible!” Ian Holloway, Open University student

This leaflet summarises the support services and facilities that are available for students of The Open University who have a disability, health condition, mental-health disability or specific learning difficulty (such as dyslexia) that affects their ability to study, attend a residential school or take examinations.

An audio CD, Braille or electronic version can be made available. Please contact the Disabled Student Services Resources Team (contact details are at the end of this leaflet).

It is also available online at www.open.ac.uk/disability

Our commitment to you

Over 9000 people with disabilities study with us each year. Our mission is to be ‘open to people, places, methods and ideas’. Most of our courses don’t have entry requirements and, wherever we can we will provide additional support for students to enable them to take part in every aspect of university life.

Our Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan set out our policy and commitment, and are available on our website at www.open.ac.uk/our-student-policies

Why choose The Open University?

We offer a wide range of courses from introductory to postgraduate level, and the study materials are carefully written to provide support throughout your learning.

Support is also available from a tutor. We can help put arrangements in place to meet additional requirements you may have in connection with your disability.

Where can I get advice?

We want to help you make the right choices. If you need help with choosing courses or advice about study arrangements, tutorial support or financial support, or have any other enquiry about studying with us, please contact the Student Registration & Enquiry Service (contact details are at the end of this leaflet).

What support can I expect?

Disabled Students' Allowance

A Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) is a government grant that can help with the extra costs of studying arising from a disability or specific learning difficulty. It is not means-tested (based on financial circumstances) and there is no age limit for eligibility.

You may be eligible for a DSA if:

- you have a mental-health condition;
- you have a specific learning difficulty (such as dyslexia);
- you have a physical disability;
- you have a medical condition which affects your ability to study;
- you are deaf or hard of hearing; or
- you are blind or partially sighted.

You must also meet the following conditions.

- You must live in the UK.
- You must be registered to study at least 30 credit points (60 if you live in Scotland).
- You must be working towards an OU qualification.

We will send you information explaining how to apply when you contact us or register for a course, or courses, worth 30 points or more and tell us about your disability or other specific needs.

A DSA can open the door to a wide range of assistive technologies (specialist equipment to help you to study effectively), and can pay for study-related help such as a notetaker or interpreter for tutorials (The level of support available may differ depending on where you live). It will also pay for a needs assessment that will help you, along with a

trained expert, to work out exactly what you need to help you with your studies.

If you are eligible for a DSA, The Open University will only provide study support that cannot be provided by the DSA. So you should apply for a DSA if you are eligible.

You can find out more information on our website at **www.open.ac.uk/disability**.

Other financial support

As well as the Disabled Students' Allowance, you may be eligible for other financial support or you may qualify for help towards the cost of course fees and study expenses. You can get more information by visiting our website at **www.open.ac.uk/financialsupport** or by phoning the Student Registration & Enquiry Service.

Tutorials

The type of tutorial support we provide depends on your course, how many other students there are in your group and where they all live. It can include face-to-face group meetings or tutorials by phone or online forums. Tutorials are an optional but valuable part of many OU courses.

We can arrange for you to have sign-language interpreters, lip speakers, notetakers and so on at tutorials. We may also be able to provide you with assistive equipment (explained below).

Extra tuition may be available if you are experiencing difficulties with your course or if you can't go to a tutorial.

Study materials

Many of our study materials are available in accessible formats. We have audio recordings and electronic versions of many of our course texts and set books, and transcripts of DVDs and audio CDs. We can also supply many course texts in large print or with spiral binding (to make them easier to handle) if you ask us.

Assistive equipment

If you are not eligible for a DSA, we may still be able to help you from the wide range of assistive equipment we have available – including computers with assistive software, digital voice recorders, talking calculators, audio players and portable magnifiers. We can arrange

for you to have a needs assessment and lend you the equipment free of charge for the period of your study. If you just need small items, a discussion with us may be enough.

Residential schools

If your course has a residential school, we can help you by sending you our booklet *Meeting your needs at residential school*. We will ask you to tell us about the services and facilities you may need us to provide. More information is available on our website at www.open.ac.uk/residential-schools.

Examinations and assessments

We try to adjust arrangements to suit individual needs so that all students can be assessed on the same basis. For example, if your course has an examination, we may arrange for you to have extra time, rest breaks or to take your examination at home. We can provide question papers in alternative formats (Braille, audio recording, large print or special colours) and you may be allowed to present your answers in different ways, for example, Braille, audio recording, computer disk, or by dictating to an 'amanuensis' (scribe).

Careers service

We can help you to match courses to your career ideas, discuss career plans with you, help you to complete applications and CVs, prepare for interviews and look for employment, as well as helping you to consider further study or professional training.

You can find out more by visiting our website at www.open.ac.uk/careers or by contacting our Student Registration & Enquiry Service. You can also ask for our publication *OU study and your Career* or view it on our website.

Telling us about your requirements

When you apply or register for a course with us, we will ask if you have a disability or additional requirement that might affect your studies. If you answer 'yes', we'll send you our booklet *Meeting your needs*, which gives more detailed information about the services and support we provide.

We'll ask you to complete a Facilities Request Form to tell us about your disability and study requirements, and will use the information to help us make additional support arrangements for you.

If you are studying 30 credit points or more (60 if you live in Scotland), we'll ask you to fill in a DSA application form as well.

Please be aware that it may take us several months to provide some additional services and facilities. Please register as early as possible so that they can be ready for you in good time.

Confidentiality

We will treat all the information you give to us and to the DSA office as confidential and will use it only to provide you with services and facilities as a student.

So that we can help you make the most of your studies, please tell us about any additional requirements you may have in connection with your disability, health condition, mental-health disability or specific learning difficulty (such as dyslexia). If you do not let us know, we may not be able to support you effectively or provide you with the services described in this leaflet. Please let us know as soon as possible and ideally when you first apply or register with us.

Please note that you may apply for a Disabled Students' Allowance without telling us about your disability or specific learning difficulty. However, in these circumstances, you will not automatically receive an application form, but will need to contact the DSA office direct to ask for one.

If you live outside the UK

There are some services we can't provide for disabled students outside the UK. For example, we may not be able to provide you with a sign-language interpreter or lend you a computer if you live outside the UK, although we will do our best to support you in other ways.

Please contact us to discuss your individual circumstances.

Your comments

The Open University is always interested in improving its services to students. If you're unhappy with a particular service – or if you feel you've had particularly good service – please tell us.

Contact information

Advice about study in the UK and for British Forces Post Office (BFPO) addresses outside the UK

Student Registration & Enquiry Service

Phone: +44 (0)845 300 60 90

Our lines are open:

- Monday to Friday 08.00–20.00 (UK time); and
- Saturday 09.00–17.00

Calls to this line from the UK are charged at the UK local rate when calling from a UK landline.

Wales/ Y Brifysgol Agored yng Nghymru

Phone: 029 2047 1170

Email: Wales@open.ac.uk

If you would prefer to discuss your study needs in Welsh, you are welcome to contact The Open University in Wales in Cardiff.

Os yw hi'n well gennych drafod eich anghenion astudio yn Gymraeg mae croesco i chi gysylltu â'r Brifysgol Agored yng Nghymru yng Nghaerdydd.

Advice about study outside the UK

The Open University in Ireland

Phone: 028 9024 5025

(From the Republic of Ireland) 048 9032 3722

Email: Ireland@open.ac.uk

For other countries

Phone your country representative.

Phone: +44 (0)191 213 1380

Email: Europe@open.ac.uk

(The Open University in the North)

Other useful contact information

Disabled Student Services Resources Team

Phone: 01908 653745

Email: disabled-student-resources@open.ac.uk

Textphone: 01908 655978

Fax: 01908 655547

Disabled Students' Allowance Offices

Phone: 01908 654136

Email: DSA-Queries@open.ac.uk

Textphone: 01908 659955

Fax: 01908 659956

For students in Scotland

Phone: 0131 226 3851

Email: Scotland@open.ac.uk

Fax: 0131 220 6730

Websites

www.open.ac.uk/disability

www.open.ac.uk/our-student-policies

www.open.ac.uk/residential-schools

www.open.ac.uk/study

www.open.ac.uk/careers

www.open.ac.uk/financialsupport

Disclaimer

Although we will do all we can to provide you with services that meet your requirements so that you can study our courses successfully, we cannot guarantee this. We will give you as much notice as we can of any limit on our services.

We may record our phone calls with you to make sure that we have carried out your instructions correctly and to help us improve our services through staff training.

This publication was prepared by Disabled Student Services and produced by the Student Services Communications Team. While we have done everything possible to make sure the information is accurate, the information may change in the light of altered regulations or policy, or because of financial or other restrictions.

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The Open University Student Services

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