Applying for SAAS Disabled Students’ Allowance (DSA)

Video guide for first-time applicants

If you have not applied for the SAAS Disabled Students Allowance before, this video should help you to complete your application and get it ready to send to The Open University.

The DSA Form and Guidance Notes are available to help you fill in your forms, but here are some tips for things that students often find confusing.

The form and guidance notes can be downloaded from the SAAS website (www.saas.gov.uk), or by completing a Request for a DSA form, both of which are linked alongside this video.

You can apply for DSA before or after your module has started, but note that the closing date for applications is the 31st March each academic year and that the process often takes 2-3 months for the support to be put in place.

Your application is only valid for one academic year of study, so you should apply for DSA in each year of your course.

It is important that you meet the eligibility criteria, which are listed on Pages 3 & 4 of the DSA Guidance Notes. If you are unsure if you meet the eligibility criteria, please contact SAAS on the details listed on their website.

Please complete all sections of the form using black ink in capital letters. If you download the form, you can type your answers then print the form to sign it.

If you have not yet applied for DSA before, you will not have a reference number for Section A. Leave this part blank.

It is important that you complete all the boxes in Section B, ensuring that the details are correct, and that they match the details on your OU record, especially your name, date of birth and address.

If you have one, you must include your National Insurance number. We won’t send the form to SAAS if this number is missing and we will ask you for further details.

Your bank details, and the district that issued your UK Birth Certificate, must be provided. If you are unsure of the exact district for your birth certificate, the town or city should be enough.

To complete Section C, you should tick all of the relevant boxes that apply, and if you would like to include more information, you can do so in the space provided here.

In the first year that you apply for DSA, you will be asked to provide supporting documents to confirm your disability and/or health condition. The supporting documents should be clear photocopies, not originals. Please refer to the Guidance Notes for further information.

You must complete all questions in Section D. For further information on the DSA residency criteria, please refer to the Guidance Notes or contact SAAS with any questions.
You must complete all of Section E. It is important to provide these details with the relevant dates. If you have studied at any college or University since leaving school, please include these details here.

Under the employment and unemployment details, you must include any Full time or Part Time employment, and/or any unemployment, from three years before your OU qualification started. If you were unemployed, you must write the town where you lived at the time. If these details are not provided, SAAS will contact you for this information, and it will cause a delay in your application.

To complete Section F, you must enter The Open University in the first box.

For the second box, enter the name of your Degree, Diploma or Certificate that you are registered towards, and the third box must include the module or modules that you are registered for this academic year.

The eligibility criteria states that you must be studying at least 60 credits in a year. If you are registered to study any less than 60 credits, you will not be eligible for DSA.

For the remaining questions in this section please try to answer as accurately as possible, but if you are unsure of any answers then just leave the question blank and we will complete this for you.

You do not need to fill in Section G, as this is something an Open University Disability Advisor will complete upon receiving your form.

For Section H, if this is your first DSA application, and you will be needing a Needs Assessment, you can tick the second box. You will not need to complete the rest of section H, as this will be discussed with you at your DSA needs assessment.

It is important to read over the Declaration and Agreement in Section I. The first box will be completed by the OU Disability Advisor, however you must sign and date at the bottom of this page. If you do not sign and date here, then your application will be delayed as it will need to be posted back to you.

Once you have completed your application form please send it, and any required evidence, to:

Student Recruitment & Support Scotland
The Open University in Scotland
10 Drumsheugh Gardens
Edinburgh
EH3 7QJ

We hope you found this useful, if you have any more questions you can contact The Open University in Scotland on 0131 226 3851. Thanks for watching.