

Evidencing your disability and the Disabled Student Allowances (DSA)

Helen Duncan

Disability and SpLD Advisor

Aims and Objectives

- Be able to identify and obtain suitable evidence
- Identify why this is important and use to your advantage
- Knowledge of who to provide this to and successfully prepare for university
- Understand what can be provided by DSA
- How to apply for DSA
- What to expect from your chosen university

Evidence

Diagnostic report

- Specific Learning Differences (SpLD)
- Dyslexia
- Dyspraxia
- ADHD

Medical evidence

- Long term physical and mental health conditions
- Sensory or mobility impairments
- Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC)
- Other or multiple disabilities

Medical evidence

- GP or consultant letter
- Letter/report from physio or occupational therapist
- Community Psychiatric Nurse or care manager
- Care coordinator working in a mental health team (from CAMHS)

Diagnostic report

- Specialist Teacher
- Educational Psychologist
- Dyslexia Action
- Independent assessors
- Universities often work with assessors or employ them.

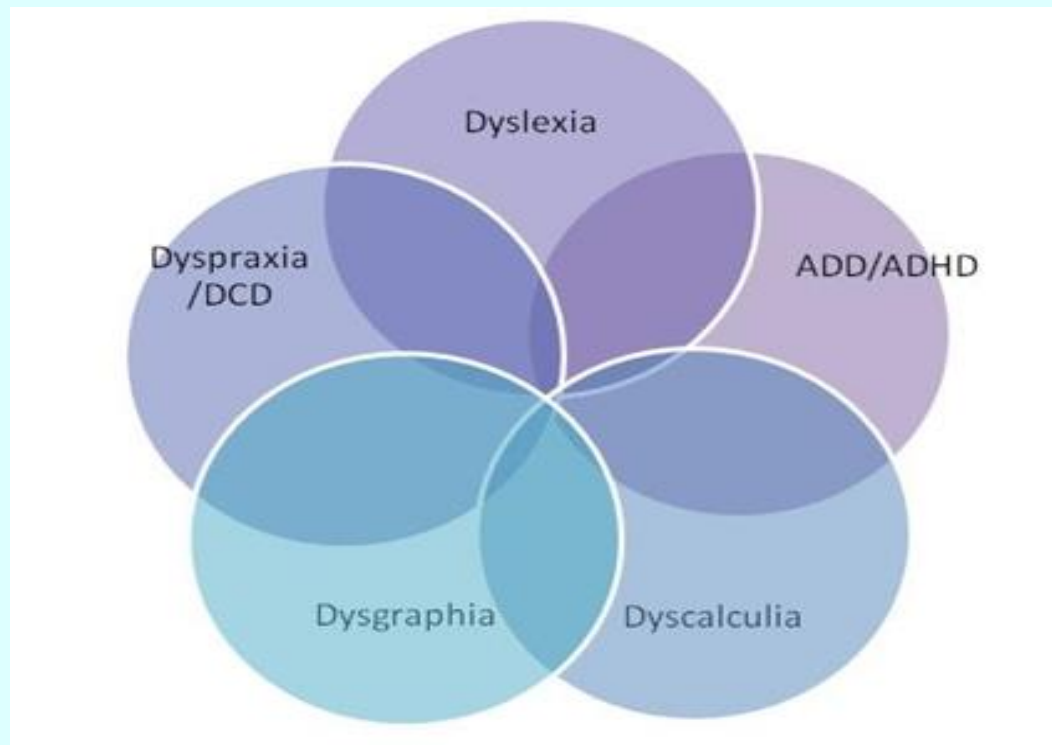


Check if Suitable for Disabled Student Allowance (DSA)



What am I being assessed for?

Diagnosing Specific Learning Differences (SpLD) an assessment for:



Important to have a **Full diagnostic** assessment

What does the assessment involve?

Testing; 3 main areas

- Literacy abilities
- General abilities (IQ)
- Specific abilities indicative of SpLD



Why is the assessment important for Higher Education?

- Different level of study- emphasis on extensive **research** and **writing**
- To enable you to get the **most** out of your **studies**
- **Funding** for support
- So universities can put in place **adjustments** for interview and for study



Why go? benefits and concerns

- Identify your unique set of **strengths** and **weaknesses**
- Recommend **equipment**



- Recommend **exam** adjustments
- Gain confidence with disclosure
- Apply for the DSA in advance of starting university **and** have support set up before starting



What will the outcome be?

- Full written assessment report
- Knowledge if you have a SpLD profile or not
- Tool for self awareness and understanding of abilities, so you can develop personally and academically
- Suitable recommendations

Applying for Disabled Students Allowances (DSA)

- The **DSA** helps students meet the additional costs of studying, due to their disability. It is not a lump sum payment, but does fund **essential equipment** or **services**
- Not a loan
- Not means tested

What counts as a disability?

- Must have a **substantial** and **long term** adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities

Funding bodies

- Student Finance England
- Student Finance Wales
- Student finance Ni
- Student Awards Agency for Scotland
- Research Councils

Funding for

- **Specialist equipment** eg a Dictaphone and specialist software
- **Non medical helper allowance** eg dyslexia tutor or mentor
- **General allowance** for additional consumables and travel expenses

Needs Assessment

- Once you have applied, and your application is accepted you will be invited to go.
- **Finding an assessment centre.**
- The **DSA Quality Assurance Group (DSA-QAG)** has a page where you can enter your home postcode to find an assessment centre near you.
- www.dsa-qag.org.uk/

Inclusive curricula

- Many universities will provide internal support or the material and lessons will be accessible because they are designed to be inclusive

Ask about:

- The delivery and availability of teaching materials
- Capture of lectures and seminars
- Provision of any non medical helper support such as notetaking and campus assistance.

Recap

- Identifying if you have a valid diagnosis or evidence
- Obtaining a diagnosis
- Using your report or medical evidence
- Applying for DSA
- Going for a Needs Assessment
- Checking universities inclusive approach and internal support

Any Questions?

next step: Applying for DSA with your other
Student Finance