

# Evidencing your disability and the Disabled Student Allowances (DSA)

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# Aims and Objectives

You will be able to:

- Identify and obtain suitable evidence
- Know why it is important and use to your advantage
- Know which organisations to provide this to and prepare for university
- Understand what can be provided by DSA
- Apply for DSA
- Know what support to ask for 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

# What is a diagnostic assessment?

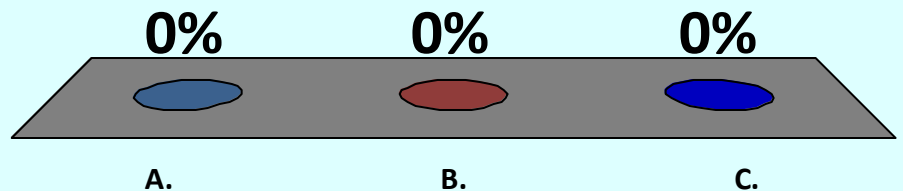
Assessment of cognitive skills by a professional holding an assessment certificate

Different from:

- Assessment for exam adjustments
- Completing checklists and screening tools
- A Needs Assessment

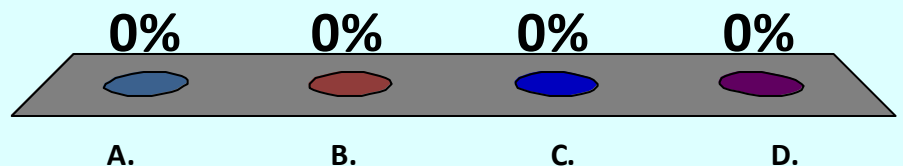
# Have you been for a full diagnostic assessment?

- A. No
- B. Yes
- C. Not sure



# How can your diagnostic assessment support you?

- A. Means you can apply for DSA
- B. Gain an understanding of difficulties
- C. Gain a Understanding of strengths
- D. Means you can order recommended equipment



# Diagnostic report

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

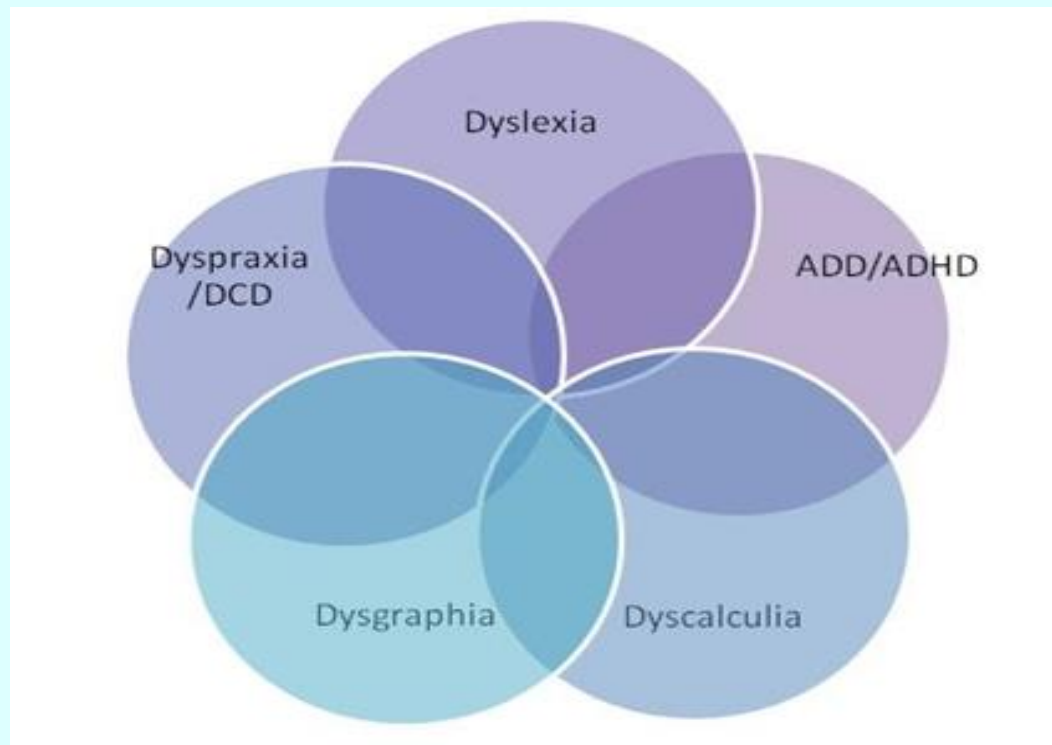


Check if Suitable for Disabled Student Allowance (DSA)



# 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 (underlying ability)
- 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

# Medical evidence

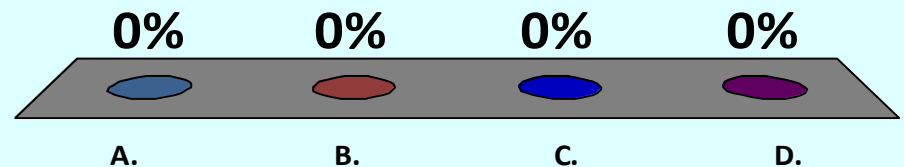
- GP or consultant letter
- Letter/report from physio or occupational therapist
- Community Psychiatric Nurse or care manager
- Care coordinator working in a mental health team (from CAMHS)

# 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?

- A. Dyslexia or other Specific Learning Differences
- B. Mental Health Difficulties
- C. Long Term Health conditions
- D. Physical and sensory impairments





# 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 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/](http://www.dsa-qag.org.uk/)

# University support

- 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