



STUDENT DISABILITY SERVICE GUIDE

REMOVING BARRIERS TO LEARNING



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

STUDENT DISABILITY
SERVICE

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Checklist

- Disclosed on UCAS form
- Obtained appropriate evidence
- Registered with the Student Disability Service
- Applied for Disabled Students' Allowances (where applicable)
- Applied for accommodation adjustments (where appropriate)



What Support Is Available?

The Student Disability Service is able to provide support for students if they have a condition which meets the definition of disability in the [Equality Act 2010](#). A person is disabled under the Equality Act 2010 if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on their ability to carry out normal daily activities (this includes study-related activities).

If you think you may face barriers to learning during your time at University as a result of a disability, Specific Learning Difficulty, a long-term health condition or a mental health impairment we can help you to access the appropriate support to enable you to take full advantage of the university experience.

Support offered includes liaising with academic departments, arranging exam accommodations and other reasonable adjustments as required.

We can support you in a number of ways including:

- Access to appointments / drop in sessions.
- Support in obtaining appropriate evidence.
- Help with applying for funding such as Disabled Students' Allowances.
- Advice about enabling equipment and software.
- Accessing non-medical helper support such as a specialist mentor or study skills tutor.
- Information about other support services across the university.
- Support in accessing appropriate accommodation.

We can also support you to access the [Academic Skills Centre](#), which offers confidential appointments, workshops and online resources for taught students.



Why Should I Disclose?

Telling us about your disability (including; dyslexia, mental health and other conditions) as early as possible, allows more time for you to obtain appropriate evidence, identify any support and adjustments that you might need and apply for any financial support you may be entitled to.

Undergraduate applicants can choose to disclose via their UCAS application form. We recognise that some may find disclosure difficult, but choosing to disclose a disability on your UCAS application will not be considered by the University as part of the selection process. Your application will be assessed on academic merit alone.

You can [register](#) with the Student Disability Service by completing an online form at any time via Access the Student Disability Service (if you require an alternative format please e-mail disability@contacts.bham.ac.uk).

If you feel that you might have a disability (including a Specific Learning Difficulty such as dyslexia or dyspraxia) but have not received a diagnosis, please contact us so that we can advise you further.

By disclosing, you will be able to receive the benefit from the support options available as early as possible.



What Evidence Will I Need?

To be eligible for disability support and adjustments you will need to provide appropriate written evidence. You can also use your evidence to apply for Disabled Students' Allowances where applicable. Appropriate written evidence can include, but not limited to:

- General Practitioner
- Psychiatrist
- Psychologist
- Specialist teacher assessor

Where possible we advise obtaining evidence before you start your course to ensure you can access support when you arrive (although you are able to apply with the service at any time during your studies). We are unable to create a Reasonable Adjustment Plan without appropriate evidence.



What Evidence Will I Need?

Physical, Sensory, Medical or Mental Health Impairment(s)

We require medical evidence that clearly states that you have a long-term impairment(s), such as a Disabled Students' Allowances needs assessment report (where it states evidence has been seen by the needs assessor) or a GP or consultant's letter. Appointment letters or prescriptions are not sufficient for this purpose. Please note that some GPs charge for writing evidence letters and you will be liable to pay this fee.

If you do not already have appropriate evidence, or are awaiting a full assessment, we advise you to obtain a letter from an appropriate medical professional.

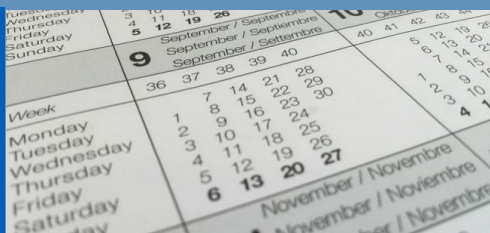
It is helpful for the medical evidence to include:

- Diagnosis
- Likely duration of the disability / health condition (long term)
- Possible effects of the disability on learning / attendance at University or day to day activities.

An alternative option would be to ask your GP to complete a Student Finance evidence form which, if it identifies a long-term condition, should be accepted by the Student Disability Service and in your application for a DSA (where eligible). You can access the Disabled Students' Allowance evidence form on the [gov.uk website](https://www.gov.uk).



NHS



What Evidence Will I Need?

Specific Learning Difficulties

We require a full diagnostic assessment report completed in accordance with the SpLD Assessment Standards Committee's (SASC) by either:

- An Educational Psychologist who holds a current Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) certificate or
- A specialist teacher assessor holding a current assessment practising certificate (APC).

Please note, a *JCQ Form 8* is insufficient.

If you think you might be dyslexic, dyspraxic, dyscalculic and/or have attention and concentration difficulties but have not undertaken an assessment yet, you may wish to use a screening tool to explore your strengths and weaknesses. Following this, should you wish to undertake a full diagnostic assessment, organisations that may be able to assist include:

- [PATOSS - Tutor Index](#)
- [British Dyslexia Association \(BDA\)](#)
- [The British Psychological Society \(BPS\)](#)

Students are responsible for arranging and funding their own assessment. Further information about the process can be found at [Screening and Formal Assessment for Specific Learning Difficulties \(SpLDs\) such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia and ADHD](#).



What Evidence Will I Need?

Autism

We require a medical letter or report from a GP / medical consultant which confirms a diagnosis and that this has a long-term impact on your day to day life. We may also consider a needs assessment report which states that the evidence has been seen.

If you have an Educational Health and Care Plan (EHCP) which has been issued by a local authority, we can review these on a case by case basis; the recommendations from this may not be replicated at the University.

For further information about accessing the Service and evidence requirements please visit [Access the Student Disability Service](#) or contact the team at disability@contacts.bham.ac.uk.



What Is A Reasonable Adjustment Plan?

The reasonable adjustment plan (RAP) outlines the support and reasonable adjustments that have been recommended for you by a Disability Advisor. It provides information for your School and the wider university in relation to your requirements to enable them to implement accordingly. This plan remains with you for the duration of your course and can be amended any time, therefore should be viewed as a starting point in regards to opening a conversation about your adjustments.

Eligibility

We are able to provide you with a reasonable adjustment plan if you have an impairment that meets the legal definition of a disability set out in the UK Equality Act (2010), i.e. any impairment that has a ‘substantial and long-term effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’.

We support students with a range of difficulties including, but not limited to:

- Dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADHD and other specific learning difficulties (SpLDs).
- Autism.
- Long-term mental health related impairments.
- Unseen disabilities such as autoimmune conditions, connective tissue disorders, diabetes, epilepsy, cancer, HIV and chronic fatigue.
- Long-term mobility impairments.
- Sensory impairments.



What Is A Reasonable Adjustment Plan?

Types of adjustments and support available

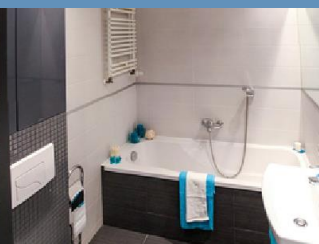
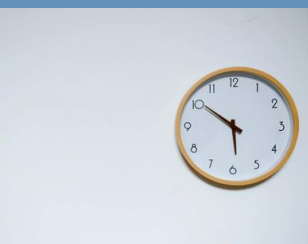
In accordance with inclusive practice, all UoB students should have access to the support detailed in the Inclusive Practice Standards ([link to the standards](#)).

Reasonable adjustments may be recommended on a case by case basis and can include, but are not limited to:

- Exam adjustments such as extra time, rest breaks or a separate room.
- Extended deadlines for coursework.
- Accommodations for presentations and group work.
- Support in lectures and practical sessions.
- Adjustments when carrying out research.
- Support when completing a year in industry or study abroad.
- Timetabling in accessible rooms.
- Adjustments or prioritisation for suitable UoB accommodation, such as en-suite or wheelchair accessible accommodation.

Applying for reasonable adjustments

To receive a reasonable adjustment plan (RAP) you need to make an application with the Student Disability Service. You can apply before you arrive at UoB or at any point during your course. RAPs are working documents and can be reviewed as needed. You are encouraged to contact a Disability Advisor should your circumstances/course change in order to review your RAP.



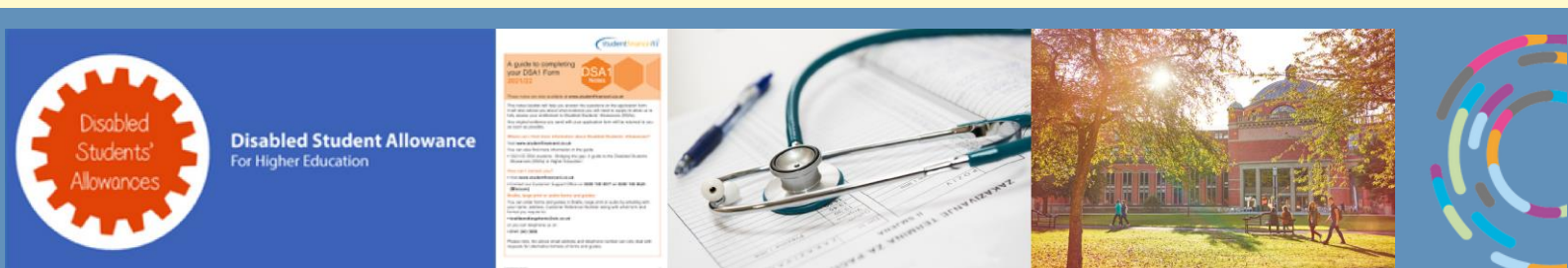
How Might My Support Be Funded?

The Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) is a grant available to eligible students to help with study related costs they may have as a direct result of a disability, long-term health condition, mental-health condition, or specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia.

You may get DSA funding towards specialist equipment, non-medical helper support and other study related costs that result directly from disability. Eligible students should apply to their student finance body e.g. Student Finance England. If you are a full-time student and applying for other student finance, such as a Tuition Fee Loan, you'll be able to apply for DSA from your online account after you've submitted your main student finance application. If you are only applying for DSA and no other type of student finance, you need to complete a paper application form known as 'Application for Disabled Students' Allowances'. This can be found on your student finance body website.

The application process for DSA can take around 14 weeks. You will need to submit medical/diagnostic evidence alongside your application. You should apply as early as possible (applications for the following academic year open around March) to make sure you'll have everything you need ready for the start of your course.

Additional external (discretionary) grants such as a [Snowdon Trust grant](#) may also be available. Students who are not eligible for DSA funding or students whose need for funded support exceeds that available through DSAs should discuss their needs with the Student Disability Service as alternative funding can sometimes be arranged. Students not eligible for DSA includes, but not limited to, international/EU students and degree apprenticeship programs, although we can discuss potential alternatives.



How Might My Support Be Funded?

£200 DSA computer top up

As Student Finance England does not fund the first £200 of any DSA-required computer or laptop for students, the University has decided to offer financial assistance to registered students who are in financial difficulty and affected by the cost of the required equipment. The Student Disability Service can advise on accessing this funding.

Accommodation funding

Students applying for university owned or partner accommodation who have disability related needs that result in additional accommodation costs may be eligible for financial assistance from the University. Accessing this should be discussed with the Student Disability Service. Students in non-university affiliated accommodation who experience additional accommodation costs should discuss this with their DSA study needs assessor.

Support with daily living and personal care

If you think you may need support with normal day to day living tasks or personal care, UK students should discuss a support package with your local authority social services department well in advance of starting University. If you are travelling between local authorities for periods of time to undertake University study, the local authority of your hometown (e.g. Where you are ordinarily resident) will be responsible for social care funding/arrangements. International and EU students are not eligible for financial assistance with care costs from the British government, and the University does not fund personal care support. Care and support can be very expensive and how you will meet your personal care and support needs should be thoroughly investigated and additional costs budgeted for before taking up a place at the University.



What If I Have Accommodation Requirements?

We endeavour to provide a wide range of support, all determined on a case by case basis upon application to the Student Disability Service and filling out the 'Additional Requirements' section of your accommodation application form.

Adaptations and types of support in the past have included:

- Prioritisation for en-suite, self-catered, close to campus or ground floor rooms, quieter rooms.
- Mini fridge in your room for personal medication and/or specialist food.
- Visual alarm and doorbells for Deaf or Hard of Hearing students.
- We can make physical adaptations to a room, but these need to be discussed and planned well in advance of you starting university, and may need the input from an Occupational Therapist, depending on complexity.

You may be able to stay in university accommodation for the duration of your course. Please speak to us for more information.



Are There Other Services That Can Help Me?

Wellbeing Officers

Each School has its own Wellbeing Officer(s), who are able to provide practical and emotional support for you if you are experiencing personal problems, particularly when these might interfere with your academic work. They can recommend sources of professional help and, if appropriate, will guide you through the extenuating circumstances process.

Guild Advice

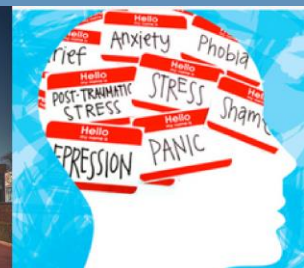
Guild Advice is a free, impartial and confidential advice service for students at the University of Birmingham; they're always on hand if you need someone to talk to, and they offer practical advice on various aspects of student life. Advisors are based in the ground floor of the Guild, and they specialise in the following issues: Academic, housing, finance, international support and wellbeing.

Mental Health 24/7 Support Line

UBHeard is a confidential listening and support service offering all registered students emotional and mental health support.

Multi-Faith Chaplaincy

The Multi-Faith Chaplaincy offers an inclusive space for prayer, meditation, relaxation and worship, among many other activities. All students are welcome to visit, regardless of whether or not follow a particular faith.



Are There Other Services That Can Help Me?

[Mental Health and Wellbeing Service](#)

The Mental Health and Wellbeing Service is staffed by a team of experienced and qualified practitioners who can provide therapeutic support to you whilst you are studying at the University of Birmingham. They work with students for up to 4 sessions concentrating on the issues that are causing you the most distress. Depending on the nature of your concern you may see one of our Psychological Practitioners who utilise counselling skills and a range of psychological approaches to provide support and tools to help with the problems you are facing. For more complex issues you may be referred to speak with a Counsellor. All Counsellors are BACP accredited.

[Nightline](#)

Nightline is an anonymous, confidential, non-judgemental and non-directive listening and information service run by students, for students. They promise to listen and support you as you talk through whatever's on your mind.

You can contact Nightline via email (listening@birmingham.nightline.ac.uk).

[Pause@Uni](#)

Pause is a mental health drop-in service on campus. You can talk to one of their experienced and qualified team of friendly practitioners about anything that may be causing you worries- it does not have to be about your academic or student life. For updated information see intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/pause



How are you?

Useless
Never good enough
Fragile: Anxious
I'm falling apart and
you don't notice it
Pathetic: Annoying
Lonely
Defeated
Confused: Betrayed
Broken
Rejected

Pause.



Glossary

DSA - Disabled Students' Allowance

RAP - Reasonable Adjustment Plan

SFE - Student Finance England

UoB - University of Birmingham

If you require an alternative format, do get in touch via
disability@contacts.bham.ac.uk





Contact us

Student Disability Service
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Edgbaston
Birmingham
B15 2TT

disability@contacts.bham.ac.uk
[Website](#)



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