

Disabled Student Service Bulletin

June 2011



This bulletin gives you an update on the Student Finance England service for disabled students for academic years 2010/2011 and 2011/2012 – how we are doing and what's new.

DSA PARTNER SEMINARS

Thank you to everyone who contributed to our recent Disabled Students' Allowances Partner Seminars. We hope you obtained a clear and complete understanding of the service for academic year 2011/2012 and look forward to working with you this year.

AY 2011 / 2012 APPLICATIONS

We're encouraging all students who are going to uni this autumn to apply online for their student finance now, at: www.direct.gov/studentfinance

The application deadline for new customers was 31 May but customers can still apply for student finance. They should apply now and we will do all we can to ensure they have their funding at the start of term.

The deadline for applications from returning students is 30 June and we are encouraging students who are continuing their HE studies to re-apply by this date.

DSA APPLICATIONS

New students who want to apply for Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs), in addition to their main loans and grants, should indicate this on their online application. We will then post them a DSA1 form to sign and return with evidence of their disability.

Returning DSA customers should re-apply for their main loans and grants online and indicate that they wish their DSA support to continue.

Returning DSA customers who are receiving DSA support only, who are part-time or post graduate customers need to re-apply for DSAs and should go online and download the long version of the DSA1 form.

APPLICATION PROCESSING

AY 2011 / 2012

DSA applications for academic year 2011/2012 are coming through fast. As of 19 June, we have received 8,875 DSA applications which is 20% of what we expect to receive for AY 2011/2012.

We're pleased that so many students are applying for their DSAs early, rather than waiting until they start uni, and would encourage partners to continue to support us by promoting this message to students.

AY 2010 / 2011

As at 19 June, we have received over 37,700 DSA applications with is 99% of what we expect to receive for AY 2010/2011.

Over 27,500 of the applications received are completely processed and the student is receiving DSA support. We're waiting for eligibility evidence from around 2,200 customers and for needs assessment reports from a further 7,000 customers before their support can be finalised. We have another 800 applications which we are currently working on.

DSA BOOK ALLOWANCE

There has been no change in policy regarding the DSA book allowance. Provided recommendations are backed up with specific justification in the needs assessment report, the allowance can be used for the purchase of course related books.

For example, dyslexic students can potentially receive an allowance for textbooks (i.e. course related books) so that the student may use them to implement various reading strategies, such as bookmarking and highlighting key words. The rationale for this is that a dyslexic student may need to purchase more of the textbooks on their reading list than their non-dyslexic counterparts for whom library loans may suffice for a larger proportion of the books they need to read.

FASTER SERVICE FOR LATE APPLICANTS

Following feedback from partners, we have now opened a dedicated email inbox for Needs Assessors and Disability Advisors to use when submitting information (such as assessments and recommendations) for students who apply for DSAs late in their final year of study.

This inbox will be prioritised above all areas so we can fast track the assessment of support for these students. The inbox is dsa_lateapps@slc.co.uk. For more information please refer to our [late application guidance](#) on the Practitioners website.

NEW PARTNER ENQUIRIES TEAM

We've implemented a dedicated response team, made up of experienced employees, who now handle all DSA enquiries from stakeholders and partners across all of our communication channels. This moves the service to within the DSA team, giving partners a more specialist, expert service. The line is open between 9:30 - 4:30 and the number to call hasn't changed - 01325 215194.

SUPPLIER INVOICES

We've significantly increased the number of employees who are working to process supplier invoices in order to reduce our current turnaround times. This is in response to the very high level of invoices which have been coming through following the transfer of student finance responsibilities from Local Authorities.

IRLEN SYNDROME

Please read our updated guidance on Visual Stress / Irlen Syndrome via our '[Your questions answered](#)' document.

FEEDBACK

We would like your feedback on this bulletin, please email: stakeholder_enquiries@slc.co.uk

More information for practitioners is on our Student Finance England practitioners' website: www.practitioners.studentfinanceengland.co.uk

DISABLED STUDENT STAKEHOLDER GROUP

The Disabled Student Stakeholder group met on 1 June. They discussed:

- research working being taken forward to progress the development of non-medical help procurement guidance
- initiatives to speed up the DSA process for late final year applicants
- how the policy of paying against agreed hours for non-medical help support could be improved to reduce the burden on Disability Practitioners to update estimates once the actual required NMH hours are known.

NEED TO CONTACT OUR DISABLED STUDENT TEAM?

- For Practitioners with DSA enquiries: Tel - 01325 215194 (this number is not for students)
- For practitioners with queries relating to policy and regulations email – ssin_Queries@slc.co.uk Tel - 0845 602 0583 (this number is not for students)
- For disability practitioners at HEIs email – disability_adviser@slc.co.uk
- For Needs Assessment Centres email – access_centre@slc.co.uk
- For Needs Assessors or Disability Advisors submitting information on late, final year applicants email - dsa_lateapps@slc.co.uk
- Submission of Needs Assessment Reports via encrypted PGP – needs_assessment_reports@slc.co.uk
- For suppliers submitting invoices, invoice queries or specific student queries email – invoice_team@slc.co.uk
- For Needs Assessment Centres referring Educational Psychologist's reports email – Matthew_hall@slc.co.uk
- For enquiries regarding the Disabled Student Service Stakeholder Group email – stakeholder_enquiries@slc.co.uk