A guide to completing your DSA1 Form 2024/25

DSA1 Notes

These notes are also available at **www.studentfinanceni.co.uk**

This notes booklet will help you answer the questions on the application form. It will also advise you about what evidence you will need to supply to allow us to fully assess your entitlement to Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA).

Any original evidence you send with your application form will be returned to you as soon as possible.

Where can I find more information about Disabled Students' Allowance?

Visit **www.studentfinanceni.co.uk**

You can also find more information in the guide:

- '2024/25 DSA students - Bridging the gap: A guide to the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) in Higher Education'.

How can I contact you?

- Visit **www.studentfinanceni.co.uk**
- Contact our Customer Support Office on **0300 100 0077 or 0300 100 0625 (Minicom)**

Braille, large print or audio forms and guides

You can order forms and guides in Braille, large print or audio by emailing with your name, address, Customer Reference Number along with what form and format you require to:

- **brailleandlargefonts@slc.co.uk**

or you can telephone us on

- **0141 243 3686**

Please note, the above email address and telephone number can only deal with requests for alternative formats of forms and guides.

What do I need to do to get Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)?

Here is a summary of the steps involved in applying for and receiving DSA.

Step 1
Complete and return the DSA application form, or DSA Slim with evidence of your disability, long-term health condition, mental health condition or specific learning difficulty.

Step 2
We will assess your application and send you a letter to let you know if you qualify for DSA or not.

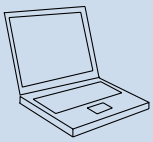
Step 3
We will ask you to attend a Study Needs Assessment to identify any specialist equipment and other support that you may need for your course.You will receive a letter which tells you where this can be done.

Step 4
If you are eligible for DSA, you attend your Study Needs Assessment and receive a report which identifies any specialist equipment and other support you may need.

Step 5
We will send you a letter to tell you whether any specialist equipment and other support that has been recommended in your Study Needs Assessment Report can be paid for from DSA. We will also provide information on how equipment can be ordered and other support arranged.

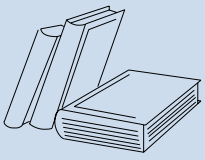
Categories of support available through DSA

- Specialist equipment



- Non-medical helpers allowance

- General allowance



- Extra travel costs

Section 1 - personal details

Personal details

a If you have been granted leave to remain as a Stateless Person, you can answer 'None' or 'Stateless' in the Nationality box.

b1 If your UK or ROI passport has expired you'll need to send other documents to prove your identity.

b2 You need to provide your valid UK passport details on the form or send us your original valid ROI passport.

If you provide your UK passport details, you do not need to send your passport to us.

If you send us your original valid ROI passport, we will return your document as soon as possible.

b4 If you don't have a valid UK or ROI passport you must send:

- your original UK or ROI birth or adoption certificate **and** a completed Birth/ Adoption Certificate form.

If you're a non-UK national, we'll ask you for some identity information at section 3

The Birth/Adoption Certificate form contains two separate declarations. The Declaration of Identity must be signed by yourself to confirm your identity. The Identity Confirmation is to verify your identity and must be completed by a person of good standing in the community (for example, a teacher, solicitor, civil servant or police officer) who has known you for at least two years.

You can download a Birth/Adoption Certificate form at **www.studentfinanceni.co.uk**

Please use your full name, as it appears on your passport or birth certificate. If your name has changed from the name that appears on your birth certificate or passport - please send the relevant evidence confirming this and give details of any previous names you have had in the additional notes section at the back of the DSA1 form.

If you have lost your birth certificate you should get a replacement by contacting the Register Office in the sub-district where your birth was registered.

Your documents will be returned to you as soon as possible.

Previous loans

c If you are behind with repayments on a previous loan, you should not apply for student finance until you have resolved this issue.

If you have any Mortgage Style (MS) Loans please call your debt owner on the telephone number shown on the most recent correspondence that you have received from them. If you do not know who your debt owner is please call **0300 100 0632** for advice.

If you have any Income Contingent Repayment (ICR) loans, please call **0300 100 0611** for advice.

Section 1 - personal details

Armed Forces

e1 & e2 You may be eligible for support to study a distance learning course outside of Northern Ireland if you or your family member (who you live with) is currently serving outside of Northern Ireland in one of the following:

- The Naval Service (Royal Navy and Royal Marines)
- The Army
- The Royal Air Force
- The Royal Military Police
- The Gurkhas

The following family members will be eligible students:

- A spouse or civil partner living with a member of the UK Armed Forces serving outside of Northern Ireland
- A child, step-child or adoptive child living with a member of the UK Armed Forces serving outside of Northern Ireland
- A dependent parent living with either;
  - A child who is a member of the UK Armed Forces serving outside of Northern Ireland
  - The child's spouse or civil partner who is a member of the UK Armed Forces serving outside of Northern Ireland

e **If you're in the Armed Forces**

You need to send a letter confirming your name, your address (or BFPO address) and which country you were ordinarily resident in before you were based at your current location. It must also confirm the country you're currently based in.

If your family member is in the Armed Forces, you need to send a letter confirming the following:

- their name
- their address (or BFPO address)
- your name
- their relationship to you
- where they're currently based
- if you've been ordinarily resident in the UK, which country they were ordinarily resident in before they were based at their current location
- if you've never been ordinarily resident in the UK, which country they signed up for the Armed Forces in

The letter you send must be signed, stamped and dated by the Armed Forces Unit Records Office.

Section 3 - residence

a1 **UK national**

If you answer ‘Yes’ to this question, you must provide your UK passport details on the form, or send your birth certificate as evidence of your nationality. If you were born outside the UK and have a British birth certificate issued by a British Consulate, send this instead of your passport, a letter or other document.

If you have provided your UK passport details in section 2, you do not need to send any further evidence of your UK nationality.

Armed forces

If you, your parents or partner are members of the armed forces, you must apply for student finance in the UK country where you/they enlisted unless they are permanently living in another area of the UK.

We can accept certified photocopies of your residency evidence, stamped with your unit stamp. You should use your BFPO address for all correspondence.

a2 **Irish citizen**

If you answer ‘Yes’ to this question, you must send your **original** ROI or EU passport.

If you hold a UK passport, you should provide your passport details in section 2 as you do not need to send further evidence of your nationality.

a3 **Family member of a UK national**

By family member, you must be the:
- husband, wife, civil partner;
- direct descendant

of a UK national.

A direct descendant is defined as the biological child, grandchild, great-grandchild and so on, of a person. For example, you are a direct descendant of your mother, your grandmother, your great-grandmother, and so on.

You must also send proof of your relationship to the UK national. This may be:
- your marriage or civil partnership certificate; **or**
- a birth certificate showing your name and the UK national’s name; **and**
- the marriage or civil partnership certificate if you or the UK national are a step-child.

If you are claiming student finance as the direct descendant of a UK national, the term means a person ‘under the age of 21; or dependants of the person or the person’s spouse or civil partner.’

You need to give us some details about your identity and residency at question **a23.**

Section 3 - residence

a4 **Settled or pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme**

e You need to give us some details about your identity and residency at question **a23.**

a5 **Child of a Swiss national**

Your parent or step-parent must have been granted settled or pre-settled status through the EU Settlement Scheme. You must have pre-settled status and be ordinarily resident in the UK, Gibraltar, EEA or Switzerland for three years prior to the first day of your first academic year.

e If you answer 'Yes' to this question, you must send us **your** birth certificate or equivalent.

To get student finance as the child of a Swiss national, your Swiss national parent must be resident in the UK on the first day of the academic year. We need a signed letter from your Swiss national parent stating their UK address, and that they live there on the first day of the academic year. They must also send **one** of the following documents:

- Bank statement
- Payslip
- Tenancy agreement/mortgage statement
- Utility bill
- Local authority correspondence
- Government department correspondence

You need to give us some details about you and your family member's identity and residency at question **a24**.

a6 **EEA or Swiss worker**

To get student finance as the family member of an EEA or Swiss national who is working, has worked or is looking for work in the UK, you and your family member must have been granted settled or pre-settled status through the EU Settlement Scheme.

My family member is my:

- husband, wife, civil partner;
- parent(s), step-parent;
- child or step-child;
- other direct ascending or descending line family member (only applicable to EEA worker family members)

A direct descendant is defined as the biological child, grandchild, great-grandchild and so on, of a person. For example, you are a direct descendant of your mother, your grandmother, your great-grandmother, and so on.

A direct relative in the ascending line is defined as the biological parent, grandparent, great-grandparent and so on, of a person. You are a direct relative in the ascending line of your child, grandchild, great-grandchild, and so on.

Other family relationships are excluded from the definitions above.

e You must send us your birth certificate or equivalent.

As proof of the current employment status of the EEA or Swiss national who is working, has worked or is looking for work, one of the following must be provided as evidence:

- A P60 or a letter from employer if currently working.
- Audited accounts, tax returns or details of income if self-employed.
- A letter from employer confirming the intention to continue working whilst studying.
- P45, P60 or letter from previous employer if currently looking for work or previously worked in the UK.

If you are the parent or other direct ascending line relative of the worker, you must be dependent on them.

For children of EEA workers, the term ‘child’ means a person ‘under the age of 21; or a dependant of the person or the person’s spouse or civil partner.’ This does not apply in cases where the EEA worker parent has died or left the UK and the child is staying on in the UK to finish their education.

Expiry date

If you were granted this status without an expiry date you should mark the expiry date box as N/A (not applicable).

If your:

- husband, wife, civil partner; or
- parent(s), step-parent

were granted this status without an expiry date you should mark the expiry date box as N/A (not applicable).

If you were granted this leave

You need to give us some details about your identity and residency at question **a23**.

If your family member was granted this leave

You need to give us some details about you and your family member's identity and residency at question **a24**.

a7 Child of a Turkish worker

To get student finance as the child of a Turkish worker, your Turkish parent must be working in the UK on the first day of your course. You must be ordinarily resident in the UK, Gibraltar, EEA, Switzerland or Turkey for three years prior to the first day of your first academic year. You must send evidence to show **your** proof of relationship by sending us your birth certificate or equivalent.

e As proof of your parent's employment in the UK, you must send their contract of employment.

You need to give us some details about you and your family member's identity and residency at question **a24**.

Section 3 - residence

a8 **Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) or the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS)**

If you were granted this leave
You need to give us some details about your identity and residency at question **a25**.

Expiry date
If you were granted this status without an expiry date you should mark the expiry date box as N/A (not applicable).

e **If your family member was granted this leave**
You should send evidence of your relationship to the person who holds the status.

Expiry date
If your:
- husband, wife, civil partner; or
- parent(s), step-parent

were granted this status without an expiry date you should mark the expiry date box as N/A (not applicable).
You need to give us some details about you and your family member's identity and residency at question **a26**.

Afghan Locally Employed Staff Ex-Gratia Scheme

This scheme was for previous employees of the UK government who resigned or were made redundant from their post. Afghan nationals relocated to the UK under this scheme are not eligible for student funding.

a9 **Settled status**
Settled status means that you can live in the UK permanently without the Home Office placing any restrictions on how long you may remain.
You are free from any restriction if any of the following apply:

- You are a British citizen.
- You have been granted 'indefinite leave to enter or remain'.
- You have a right of abode in the UK.

Further information about immigration issues can be obtained from the Home Office at **www.homeoffice.gov.uk**

e You need to give us some details about your identity and residency at question **a23**.

Section 3 - residence

a10 Ukraine Scheme

If you were granted this leave

You need to give us some details about your identity and residency at question **a25**.

If your family member was granted this leave

You need to send evidence of your relationship to the person who holds the status if it is not you. You must have been the spouse or civil partner of the person with leave on the date of the leave application.

If you're the child or step-child of the person with leave, you must have been the child or step-child on the date of leave application, and also under the age of 18 on that date.

You need to give us some details about you and your family member's identity and residency at question **a26**.

a11 Refugee status

You need to send evidence of your relationship to the person who holds refugee status if it is not you.

If you are claiming student finance as the child or step-child of a refugee, you will only be considered a 'child' if you were under the age of 18 at the time of your parent's application to the Home Office.

If you are claiming student finance as the husband, wife or civil partner of a refugee, you must have been their husband, wife or civil partner at the time of their application for asylum.

Expiry date

If you or your:

• husband, wife, civil partner; or

• parent(s), step-parent

were granted refugee status without an expiry date you should mark the expiry date box as N/A (not applicable).

If you were granted this leave

You need to give us some details about your identity and residency at question **a25**.

If your family member was granted this leave

You need to give us some details about you and your family member's identity and residency at question **a26**.

a12 Discretionary Leave to Remain

&13 You need to send evidence of your relationship to the person who holds this status if it is not you.

If you are claiming student finance as the child or step-child of someone who has been granted this status, you will only be considered a 'child' if you were under the age of 18 at the time of your parent's application to the Home Office.

If you are claiming student finance as the husband, wife or civil partner of someone who has been granted this status, you must have been their husband, wife or civil partner at the time of their application.

Expiry date

If you or your:
- husband, wife, civil partner; **or**
- parent(s), step-parent

were granted Discretionary Leave to Remain without an expiry date, you should mark the expiry date box as N/A (not applicable).

If you were granted this leave

You need to give us some details about your identity and residency at question **a25**.

If your family member was granted this leave

You need to give us some details about you and your family member's identity and residency at question **a26.**

Section 3 - residence

a14 Humanitarian Protection

You need to send evidence of your relationship to the person who has been granted Humanitarian Protection status if it is not you.

If you are claiming student finance as the child or step-child of a person granted Humanitarian Protection, you will only be considered a 'child' if you were under the age of 18 at the time of your parent's application to the Home Office.

If you are claiming student finance as the husband, wife or civil partner of someone who has been granted Humanitarian Protection, you must have been their husband, wife or civil partner at the time of their application for asylum.

If you were granted this leave

You need to give us some details about your identity and residency at question **a25**.

If your family member was granted this leave

You need to give us some details about you and your family member's identity and residency at question **a26**.

a15 Stateless Person

You need to send evidence of your relationship to the person who has been granted 'Leave to Remain' as a Stateless Person if it is not you.

If you are claiming student finance as the child or step-child of a person granted 'Leave to Remain' as a Stateless Person, you will only be considered a 'child' if you were under the age of 18 at the time of your parent's application to the UK Home Office.

If you are claiming student finance as the husband, wife or civil partner of someone who has been granted 'Leave to Remain' as a Stateless Person, you must have been their husband, wife or civil partner at the time of their application.

If you were granted this leave

You need to give us some details about your identity and residency at question **a25**.

If your family member was granted this leave

You need to give us some details about you and your family member's identity and residency at question **a26**.

a16 Victim of domestic violence or abuse

You need to send evidence of your relationship to the person who holds the status if it is not you.

If you are claiming student finance as the child or step-child of a person granted 'Indefinite Leave to Enter or Remain' in the UK as a victim of domestic violence or abuse:

- you must have a form of Indefinite Leave to Enter or Remain;
- you will only be considered a 'child' if you were under the age of 18 at the time of your parent's application to the UK Home Office; and
- you must have been their child at the time of your parent's application for Indefinite Leave to Enter or Remain

If you were granted this leave

You need to give us some details about your identity and residency at question **a25**.

If your family member was granted this leave

You need to give us some details about you and your family member's identity and residency at question **a26**.

Section 3 - residence

a17 Section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016

You need to send evidence of your relationship to the person who holds the status if it is not you.

You need to give us some details about your identity and residency at question **a25**.

a18 Calais leave

You need to send evidence of your relationship to the person who holds the status if it is not you.

You need to give us some details about your identity and residency at question **a25**.

a19 Bereaved partner

You need to send evidence of your relationship to the person who holds the status if it is not you.

If you are claiming student finance as the child or step-child of a person granted 'Indefinite Leave to Remain' in the UK as a bereaved partner:

- you must have a form of indefinite leave to remain;
- you will only be considered a 'child' if you were under the age of 18 at the time of your parent's application to the UK Home Office; and
- you must have been their child at the time of your parent's application for Indefinite Leave to Remain.

If you were granted this leave

You need to give us some details about your identity and residency at question **a25**.

If your family member was granted this leave

You need to give us some details about you and your family member's identity and residency at question **a26**.

Section 3 - residence

a20 Long residency

&21 To be eligible for support under the long residence category you must have lawful ordinary residence in the UK for the three-year period before the first day of the first academic year of your course and must be resident in Northern Ireland. This means you must have held a form of Leave to Remain issued by the Home Office for the whole of the three-year period before the first day of the first academic year of your course.

If you are under 18 on the first day of the first academic year of your course, you must also have lived in the UK for at least seven years.

If you are 18 or above on the first day of the first academic year of your course, you must also have lived in the UK for at least half of your life or 20 years.

e You should send any of the following:

- School letter and records on headed paper, signed by the Deputy Head or Head Teacher within the school. The letter and records should confirm dates you were in attendance of the school
- Letter from a GP
- Confirmation of university/college attendance
- Rates bill
- Payslips/P60/P45/self-assessed tax return
- Confirmation of employment from your employer. This should be on company headed paper and signed by a senior member of staff with contact details provided

You need to give us some details about your identity and residency at question **a23**.

Section 3 - residence

b1, b2 & b3 **Residency status**

The academic year which applies to you depends on your course start date. Your university or college will be able to confirm your academic year if you don't know it.

Date study begins between	Date academic year begins
1 August until 31 December inclusive	1 September
1 January until 31 March inclusive	1 January
1 April until 30 June inclusive	1 April
1 July until 31 July inclusive	1 July

b4 **Residency status**

We require this information because your family member's residence history may affect your eligibility for student finance. Make sure this person knows you are giving us their details.

If you were under 18 years old in the three years before the first day of the first academic year of your course, we need this information as we assume that you were resident in the same place as your parents. If they lived or worked outside of:

- the UK and Islands, or
- in the case of an EEA or Swiss national, outside of the UK, Gibraltar, EEA or Switzerland

in the three years before the first day of the first academic year of your course, we'll ask for evidence to show that this was a temporary break in residence

If you have a spouse or partner, we assume that you have been resident in the same place as them. If they lived or worked outside of:

- the UK and Islands, or
- in the case of an EEA or Swiss national, outside of the UK, Gibraltar, EEA or Switzerland

in the three years before the first day of the first academic year of your course, we'll ask for evidence to show that this was a temporary break in residence.

Section 4 - about your course and your university or college

b If you're studying part-time and want to apply for DSA you must be planning to complete your course in no more than four times the time it would take you to finish it if you were studying full-time in order to receive support. For example, if the course you are studying takes 3 years to complete on a full-time basis, you must complete it in no more than 12 years studying part-time.

Section 5 - your university or college

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability (NI) Order 2005) has made it illegal for universities and colleges to discriminate against disabled students by treating them less favourably in their admissions policies or the services they provide. Under the Act, universities and colleges must make reasonable adjustments so that disabled students are not at a substantial disadvantage compared with other students who are not disabled.

This means that you can tell your university or college about your disability, mental health condition or specific learning difficulty in complete confidence to make sure that you receive the support you need.

Section 6 - DSA information and evidence

a You meet the definition of a person with a disability under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 if you have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long term adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

e If you have a physical disability, mental health condition or one of the following specific learning difficulties: dyspraxia, AD(H)D, Acquired Dyslexia, Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Dysgraphia, Speech and Language Disorder, Auditory Processing Disorder or Tourette's; please send an up to date written medical statement from a doctor or appropriate qualified specialist confirming the nature of your disability or mental health condition.

You can also download and complete the Disability Evidence Form from **www.studentfinanceni.co.uk**.

It is your responsibility to pay any cost in relation to obtaining this evidence.

e If you have dyslexia or dyscalculia, you should provide a signed diagnostic report, written in accordance with the 2005 Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD) Working Group Guidelines, from either:

- A Practitioner Psychologist; or
- A suitably qualified specialist teacher, holding a SpLD Assessment Practicing Certificate.

It is your responsibility to pay any costs to obtain the required evidence.

c e Please send letters showing the result of each previous DSA funding application you have made and any DSA Needs Assessment Report you received from the funding authority Assessment Centre.

Terms and conditions

If you cannot sign this form, it must be signed on your behalf by your attorney. The Power of Attorney letter must be sent with this application before a signature from that attorney will be accepted.

You must notify your local Student Finance NI (SFNI) office immediately about any change in your circumstances which may affect your entitlement to financial support. The most common change of circumstance for students would be if:

- you are absent from the course for more than 60 days because of illness;
- you are absent for any other reason;
- you leave, abandon or are expelled from the course;
- you stop attending the course and do not intend, or are not allowed, to return for the rest of the academic year;
- you transfer to a different course at the same, or a different, university or college;
- you transfer from a full-time to a part-time course;
- you repeat part or all of a year of your course; or
- the date of the start or end of your course changes.

Information about data sharing for bursary and scholarship purposes

Universities and colleges will be offering financial awards such as bursaries or scholarships to their students. To help them administer these awards (i.e. to determine eligibility and entitlement to, and if relevant pay, a bursary or scholarship - 'bursary administration purposes') they will ask the Department for the Economy, your local SFNI office or the Student Loans Company for access to information you provide in connection with this application for student finance (whether on this form or at a later date).

Privacy Notice

The Student Loans Company Ltd (SLC) and the Department for the Economy are joint Data Controllers under the Data Protection Legislation. We hold information for the purposes specified in our notification to the Information Commissioner including determining eligibility for student finance, assessing the maximum amount of financial support available, payment of student finance and the detection and prevention of fraud, and may use this information for any of these.

For more information on how we'll use the information you provide go to **www.studentfinanceni.co.uk/privacy-notice** to read our Privacy Notice.

If you don't have internet access, please call us on **0300 100 0077** and we can send a copy to you.