The University of Nottingham ACCESS Centre

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1. **About the University of Nottingham ACCESS Centre**

The University of Nottingham ACCESS Centre (UNAC) was established in 2001 and is based within the Student Services Centre at the University of Nottingham.

UNAC is a recognised assessment centre registered with and accredited through DSA-QAG (Disabled Students’ Allowances Quality Assurance Group). UNAC is also a member of NNAC (National Network of Assessment Centres). We have a team of specialist Assessors and offer DSA Assessment of Needs to disabled students, including those with specific learning difficulties (such as dyslexia or dyspraxia), physical or sensory impairment, mental health issues or long-term medical conditions.

Assessors work in collaboration with students, University/College support services, funding bodies and equipment and support providers in order to establish a range of appropriate and detailed support recommendations which form the basis of the Assessment of Needs Report. Assessments are provided to those studying in and around Nottingham and the East Midlands, as well as to students from the region who are studying elsewhere within the UK. You do not have to be a University of Nottingham student to access this service.

**Client confidentiality and data protection**

The University of Nottingham Assessment Centre (UNAC) is committed to ensuring confidentiality and data protection to all its clients. All UNAC staff work in a confidential environment and all documentation that we process is stored securely. No third party will be provided with any of the information you give us, unless you give us your approval to do so. We adhere to the University of Nottingham’s Disclosure and Confidentiality Policy [link here]

After your assessment, for your DSA application to proceed, we send a copy of your report to your funding authority. It is also standard practice to send a copy to the Disability Coordinator / Adviser at your university or college, so that they are aware of the recommendations made for you as a result of your assessment.
2. **What are the Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA)?**

The Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) are non means tested and are paid to offset some of the additional costs disabled students incur in attending their Higher Education level course.

Further information and details of how to apply are available at the following website:

http://www.direct.gov.uk/dsas

**What Can the DSAs Fund?**

There are four elements of DSA support; the **maximum** DSA allowances in **2014/15** are detailed below. The amount of DSA you receive will depend on your DSA needs assessment. Depending on your needs, support from the DSA could include **specialist equipment**, a **non-medical helpers allowance**, help towards the additional costs of **travelling** to your institution and a **general allowance**.

The DSAs can only be used to cover expenditure and equipment that arise as a direct consequence of the effects of a disability on your studies. It cannot be used to cover costs that will be incurred by all students, such as standard course textbooks, basic stationery or photocopying costs and reasonable travel by private vehicle or public transport.

**DSA FOR STUDENTS UNDERTAKING FULL-TIME UNDERGRADUATE COURSES**

**Specialist Equipment Allowance** — up to **£5,212** for the duration of the course; this is for major items of equipment, such as computer equipment or specialist assistive software. However, if you are in the final few months of your course your Funding Body may only agree to fund rental of equipment and software rather than outright purchase.

**Non-Medical Helper Allowance** — up to **£20,725** for each academic year; this can be used to pay for support such as readers, note-takers, exam scribes and additional specialist learning support which dyslexic and some other disabled students may need.

**General Allowance** — up to **£1,741** for each academic year; this can be used for minor items and recurrent extra costs, such as extra photocopying, or to top-up the other allowances.

**Travel Allowance - extra costs** for the purpose of attending the institution incurred because of a disability — there is no upper limit to this element but this
allowance will not normally help with everyday travel costs which any student would expect to have.

**DSA FOR STUDENTS UNDERTAKING PART-TIME UNDERGRADUATE COURSES**

The maximum rates for students undertaking part-time undergraduate courses (including relevant OU and other distance learning courses) in 2014/15 are:

**Specialist Equipment Allowance** — up to £5,212 for the duration of the course.

**Non-Medical Helper Allowance** — as a percentage of the full-time rate (for example for a student studying 50% of a full-time course — this would be up to £10,362.50) for each academic year.

**General Allowance** — as a percentage of the full-time rate, up to £1,305 for each academic year.

**Travel Allowance - extra costs** for the purpose of attending the institution incurred because of a disability.

**DSA FOR STUDENTS UNDERTAKING FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME POSTGRADUATE COURSES**

Postgraduate DSA: there is a maximum single annual allowance of £10,362 for eligible postgraduate students on designated part-time and full-time postgraduate courses.

For more information see or download the booklet "Bridging the gap: a guide to Disabled Students Allowances (DSAs) in higher education" from the [www.direct.gov.uk/dsas](http://www.direct.gov.uk/dsas) website or contact your university student services.

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<tr>
<th>Academic year</th>
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<td>2014 to 2015</td>
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<td>2015 to 2016</td>
<td><a href="http://www.direct.gov.uk/dsas">Bridging the gap: a guide to Disabled Students Allowances (DSAs) 2015 to 2016</a> (PDF, 218KB)</td>
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3. **WHEN AND HOW SHOULD I APPLY FOR THE DSA?**

You can apply for the DSA at any time during your course. If you are a prospective student, it is recommended that you apply as soon as possible. Do not wait until your A Level results come out, as this could result in a delay in you accessing support. Ideally, you should start applying as soon as you receive either a conditional or unconditional offer from the University as the process can be quite lengthy. However, it can be done at any time after this or during your studies.

**How do I Apply?**

There are different ways of applying for DSAs. Which one you use will depend on who you are funded by and whether you are:

- doing a full-time higher education course, or
- studying part time or doing a postgraduate course

Your University/College Disability Adviser will be able to help you with your application and give you advice about other sources of funding. The DSAs are administered by different Funding Bodies including the Student Loans Company, Local Authorities, Research Councils, the NHS and the Open University. Which one you apply to will depend on the type of course you are studying and where you are living. Information regarding eligibility can be found at:

[https://www.gov.uk/student-finance](https://www.gov.uk/student-finance)

**Full-Time Higher Education Students (not NHS Funded)**

When you complete your main Student Finance application online or on paper, tick the 'Disabled Students' Allowances' box. In most cases, your Funding Body will then send you the DSA1 application form for you to complete and return, along with the 'Bridging the Gap' guidance booklet. You can also download copies of both the booklet and the form online at [www.direct.gov.uk/dsas](http://www.direct.gov.uk/dsas) or ask your Funding Body to send them by post.

If you are not applying for the Student Loan, then you need to download and fill out the long version of the DSA1 form which is available at the [www.direct.gov.uk/dsas](http://www.direct.gov.uk/dsas) website. Your University or College will need to fill out Section 5 of this form. This also applies if you are studying part time or doing a postgraduate course.
Your funding body will also ask you to provide them with evidence of your impairment or specific learning difficulty. This could be a copy of your Educational Psychologist’s or Specialist Teacher’s report, or relevant medical evidence.

If your application for Disabled Students' Allowances is accepted, your funding body will write to you requesting that you have an assessment of needs. They will inform you of how you should proceed and provide you with a link to the DSA-QAG website http://www.dsa-qag.org.uk/ where you will be able to find your nearest Assessment Centre.

Please keep the funding body letter safe as you will need to send it to the Assessment Centre before an assessment can be carried out.

NHS STUDENTS

If you are in training for social work, medicine or certain areas of healthcare, you may be able to get a bursary through the NHS. You should apply directly to the NHS Student Bursaries Team.

Medical & Dental Courses – If you are doing a standard five or six year medical or dental course you should apply through the Student Loans Company for the DSA when you are in the first four years of your course. However, in the fifth and subsequent years of study, you would need to apply through the NHS.

Graduate Entry Medical Programmes - If you are doing a four year course you should apply through the Student Loans Company for the DSA when you are in the first year of your course. However, in the second and subsequent years of study, you would need to apply through the NHS.

Social Work Programmes – if you are a full-time undergraduate, you should apply to the Student Loans Company for your DSA. If you are a part-time undergraduate you can apply either to the Student Loans Company or to the NHS.

Students on Postgraduate Social Work programmes can only apply for the DSA through the NHS.

For further information, see the www.direct.gov.uk/dsas website.

You will need to apply for the NHS DSA via your BOSS account (Bursary Online Support System)

RESEARCH COUNCIL FUNDED STUDENTS – If you are funded by a Research Council, we would recommend that you contact your Disability Adviser to discuss your DSA application, as the application process can vary. However, it is again
recommended that you apply for the DSA as early as you can, as some Research Councils have a cut-off point of 3 months after the date of commencement of your studies.

Contact us if you have any queries.

4. **WHAT IS AN ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS AND WHY IS THIS REQUIRED?**

Your funding body require you to have a DSA assessment carried out to ensure that you get the support that you will need on your course.

Although the evidence you have sent to your funding body will establish your eligibility for the DSA, a full assessment is also required in order to take account of your specific needs in relation to your studies. The assessment report will also contain advice and guidance to help you and your University/College agree reasonable adjustments they can make to ensure you get the most out of your course and can perform to your potential.

The Assessment of Needs is not a test, rather, it is a discussion with your assessor which will identify your study requirements. The assessor will consider these and identify appropriate study strategies, support, equipment and assistive technology to help you. You can then decide which of the support recommendations you may wish to use.

All recommendations made for you must be as a result of a direct association with the course you are studying and any difficulties that you may experience on your course as a direct result of your impairment or condition; this may result in your assessor being unable to recommend everything that you may feel would be useful for you.

We hope you will find your study needs assessment to be a useful experience.

The DSA Needs assessment is **not** the same as the assessment you may have had with your Educational Psychologist or Specialist Teacher.

The cost of your DSA assessment will be paid from the DSAs. Travel costs to the assessment may be met by your funding body you should ask them if this is possible. This can be paid from the General Allowance of the DSA.

**You should not arrange for a DSA assessment without first confirming with your Funding Body that they agree for you to do so.**
5. HOW DO I ARRANGE AN ASSESSMENT APPOINTMENT

If you have already received a letter from your funding body authorising the assessment, you can contact the Assessment Centre which is nearest your home or University. Contact details can be found at:

www.dsa-qag.org.uk/ or at www.nnac.org

Contact us either by email (accesscentre@nottingham.ac.uk), by telephone (0115 8467780) or by calling in to the Student Services Centre reception.

http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/StudentServices/StudentServicesCentres/index.aspx

When you contact us, please have to hand your Funding Body letter approving the Assessment as we will be asking you to provide some information from this letter. You will also need to provide us with your full contact details and information regarding the nature of your disability or specific learning difficulties.

How do I get to the assessment appointment?

We will send you written confirmation of your assessment appointment together with a map, local transport details and directions on how to find us and a few details on what to expect during your assessment. If you are travelling by car make sure that you leave plenty of time to park as the car parks can be very busy.

How Long is your Waiting List?

We aim to carry out assessments within 15 working days from the date of contact from you and sometimes we can offer you an appointment earlier than this. We will endeavour to match you with the most suitable assessor depending on the nature of your requirements. Appointment waiting times can therefore vary either at busy times. Should we get a cancellation we may be able to offer an earlier appointment.

What do I need to do/provide before the assessment?

You need to provide us with the following information, which is required no later than five working days prior to the assessment to give the Assessor time to prepare.

- Evidence of your impairment, condition or learning difficulty (a photocopy is sufficient), for example, a letter from your Doctor or Consultant or an
Educational Psychologist or Specialist Teacher’s report. This should be the same evidence that you provided to your funding body.

- Confirmation letter from your Funding Body that they agree to a DSA Needs Assessment.

- The completed Pre-Assessment form sent to you by UNAC with the appointment booking letter. This form is, among other things, to make sure that we have your correct details and will enable us to prepare for your assessment. Please complete all sections as fully as possible. There will be the opportunity to discuss them further during your assessment.

- A copy of any previous DSA Assessment reports – if appropriate

If we do not receive this documentation, we may be unable to go ahead with your appointment. Please therefore contact us if you have any problems.

If there is insufficient time to return the above by post, please either scan it and email it to us, or bring it with you to assessment. However you should also let us know that you are going to do this.

It will be helpful to both you and your assessor if, before completing your assessment form and coming to the appointment, you take a little time to think about your course of study and the likely impact on you. It might help you to think about:

- Lectures and seminars
- Any equipment you will be expected to use in specialist areas
- The amount of reading you will need to do
- Whether the course has placements or field trips
- How your learning will be assessed and how this will impact on you

The assessment is also an opportunity for you to review your study methods and any equipment you may have used before.

Please note that we can only assess for the conditions for which we have evidence.

**Before your Assessment please:**

- Read the information we send you

- Confirm to us either by email or telephone whether or not you can attend your DSA Needs Assessment appointment or to re-arrange this. We will contact you approximately one week before the date of your assessment if you have not already confirmed that you will be able to make this date
• Tell us whether or not you have changed your mobile number, as we will remind you either by calling or texting your mobile the day before your assessment

• Call us if you have any questions

Do I need to provide any further information or bring anything else with me to assessment?

If you already have your own computer, you will need to provide us with information on the specifications (make, model, processor type and speed, hard disk drive, RAM (memory), software installed etc) and approximate age of this equipment, as this will help us when we are evaluating any additional equipment or software at assessment. Please contact us if you have difficulty in finding this information, as we can talk you through this process.

**You should be aware however, that Student Finance England will not reimburse items (including equipment) purchased prior to your Needs Assessment.**

At assessment we will also require information on previous qualifications gained, so it may be helpful to also bring these details with you.

If you have hearing aids, glasses, coloured lenses or use magnifiers or any other portable aids, please also bring these with you to assessment. Contact us if you are unsure.

I need practical support/assistance or other support at assessment – such as a BSL Interpreter – what should I do?

You can bring your own support worker with you, or if you contact us, we will arrange for support to be made available. However, you do need to advise us of these and any other particular requirements as far in advance of your assessment as possible, particularly if specialist support is required or if you are a wheelchair user/have reduced mobility. For interpreters we need as much notice as possible as these will need to be booked through an external agency.
6. **WHAT TO EXPECT AT ASSESSMENT**

There are no tests involved in the assessment.

The assessment takes place in the comfortable, informal and supportive environment of our ACCESS Centre and is a discussion and exploration of your needs with one of our experienced assessors. This is an opportunity for you to discuss your additional support needs within the context of your studies. The assessor will consider support you have had previously or are currently accessing, plus study strategies or equipment and software you have already tried using. Study aids and strategies such as specialist tuition, note-taking, mentoring etc., relevant to your current course of study will then be considered and where appropriate, there will also be the opportunity to evaluate appropriate assistive technology, aids and equipment. Other disability related expenditure may also be considered.

For training purposes you may also be asked to give your permission for your assessment to be observed by another assessor.

**How long will the assessment take?**

We suggest that you allow yourself at least 2 hours.
7. **AFTER THE DSA NEEDS ASSESSMENT – WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?**

After your assessment, your assessor will compile a comprehensive report and obtain quotations for any equipment/software recommended. If you have requested it, a draft copy of the report, (which will include the quotations gained, any recommendations made and your pre-assessment form) will be emailed or sent to you approximately **10 working days** after the date of your assessment. You may receive your report earlier than this, but we cannot guarantee this, so please allow 2 weeks plus postal delivery time before contacting us to chase up your report.

The report will contain recommendations within the scope of the Disabled Students’ Allowances for the consideration of your funding body. It will also contain advice for you and your University or College. All recommendations need to be clearly justified based on your disability-related needs for the course to enable your funding body to release funding from the Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) or other funding sources.

In line with DSA-QAG/SLC requirements, 3 quotations will be obtained for any equipment/software recommended and where applicable, up to 2 quotations for Non-Medical Personal Helper’s Support.

If you have opted to receive a draft copy of the report, please read it through carefully and if you are happy with the contents, either sign the form which will be enclosed and return this to us as soon as possible, in the Freepost envelope that will be provided or email us your comments. You should note that if you do not contact us within **5 working days** of you receiving the report, we are obliged by DSA-QAG our auditing body, to send this off to the funding body. It is essential therefore that you contact us as soon as possible if there are any inaccuracies in the report or amendments that you want to be considered.

If there **are** any inaccuracies in the report or amendments to be considered, please indicate this on the report or send us an email/letter outlining the amendments requested. You can also contact us by phone or by email to discuss any changes that you wish to be considered. Depending on the nature of the changes, an updated report may then be sent to you, which you should again feedback on as soon as possible.

One copy of your report is sent to your funding body and one copy is sent to the Disability Adviser at your University or College. If you do not wish a copy to be sent to your Disability Advisor, you should indicate this, but please be aware that this may result in some of the recommended support not being put in place.

The funding body will then write to you advising you of their decision. If you have not heard from them within about 3 of 4 weeks of returning your report to us, you can either phone them yourself (their contact details should be on the front of your report) or you can ask us to contact them on your behalf.
What do I need to do after I get the final report

- Contact the Disability/ Learning Support Adviser at the University/ College to discuss the recommended support.

- Discuss and confirm examination arrangements with the Disability/ Learning Support Adviser.

- Keep itemised copies of receipts when purchasing items from the General Allowance as proof of purchase to send to your Funding Body for reimbursement.

You should not order or purchase any equipment without the prior approval of your Funding Body.

UNAC is a registered assessment centre with the Disabled Students’ Allowances Quality Assurance Group (DSA-QAG). The DSA-QAG only endorses suppliers of equipment operating through the DSA-QAG Service Level Agreement.

My funding body have not agreed to some of the recommendations in my report

Contact us as soon as possible, as we can discuss this with the funding body on your behalf.

Lesley Morrice (Manager) or

Gina Slater (Administrator) on 0115 8467780 or by email at:

accesscentre@nottingham.ac.uk
8. HOW DO I GO ABOUT GETTING MY EQUIPMENT/SOFTWARE/ SUPPORT?

EQUIPMENT

You are strongly advised not to order any recommended equipment until your funding body has informed you in writing that you may do so.

Student Finance England, Student Finance Wales, Student Finance Northern Ireland and the Student Awards Agency for Scotland will expect you to order the equipment, although the supplier will invoice your funding body directly so you will not have to fund this yourself. You will need to provide the supplier with a copy of the funding body letter agreeing to the equipment/software purchase. The contact details for your supplier are again contained in your report and are often included in the letter from the funding body. **However, you should note that if you order your equipment and subsequently do not take up your course, you may be liable to pay for this yourself.**

Research Councils require the University to purchase the equipment on behalf of the student. The Research Council will then reimburse us for the cost of this equipment.

The NHS provide funding directly to you (usually paid into your bank account) to cover the cost of the equipment and will expect you to purchase the recommended equipment from the approved supplier and send them copies of the receipts as proof of purchase.

Once your equipment has been ordered, the supplier will contact you in order to arrange a convenient time for delivery/installation of your equipment and in some cases for carrying out your initial training. Please ensure that you are available at this time or that you contact them in advance to arrange an alternative.

If the supplier has not contacted you, get in touch with them either by telephone or email, (full contact details are again in your report) providing them with your name, the reference number on the equipment quotation from your Assessment Report and your current address/phone number.

Some Universities/ Colleges can arrange to lend equipment to students who are waiting for DSA funding. Contact your Disability/ Learning Support Adviser for more information.

**Can I buy the equipment/software from another supplier or upgrade the specifications that have been recommended?**

We would not recommend that you buy your equipment from another supplier and your funding body may not agree to this. We use specialist suppliers who
have committed to an approved Service Level Agreement. They will install your software and set up your equipment either at your home or at your University accommodation. They also provide on-site warranty and insurance for the duration of your course and provide a free telephone helpline for any equipment issues you may have.

However, if you do wish to upgrade the specification recommended or to purchase the equipment from another supplier, you will need to negotiate this directly with your funding body. **However, you will need to ensure compatibility of the equipment and specialist software and will need to bear any difference in cost.** The ACCESS Centre can advise you regarding this, although will not provide alternative quotations or negotiate with any other suppliers on your behalf.

**I am in the final 6 months of my course and rental equipment has been recommended. Do I have the option of purchasing the equipment?**

Usually quotations for both outright purchase and rental of equipment will have been included in your report. Your funding body will approve whichever is the cheaper option. If this is the rental equipment and you do want to purchase this, you can liaise directly with the funding body and supplier to request this, although you would need to pay the difference in cost direct to the supplier. If you have applied for a Research Council DSA, you should advise your Assessor, as they will need to take this into account at assessment.

**Assistive Software has been recommended for my own computer. What process is involved with this?**

Unless your computer has been very recently purchased, it is likely that a health check will have been recommended. The approved supplier may be able to carry this out remotely, or may need to either carry this out at your house or at their base. The health check will identify whether your computer is of an appropriate specification to run the recommended assistive software.

If your computer is still under warranty, you will be asked to contact the supplier to try and extend the warranty for the duration of your course as your funding body will not replace a computer if this develops a fault or ceases to operate if appropriate warranty has not been taken out. If your warranty has already run out or it is not possible to extend the warranty, then we may be able to make a recommendation for future repair or replacement under the DSA.
Can I receive equipment before my course begins?

Once your Funding Body has established that you are eligible for DSA, it can pay for items of specialist equipment and software recommended in your DSA assessment report. However, your Funding Body will ask for evidence that you have been accepted on your course before they will consider doing so. If you do not go on the course, you must return any equipment you have received to your supplier.

How do I go about getting my equipment insured?

Insurance for equipment supplied through DSA can also be funded through the DSA. Check whether insurance is included in the equipment quotation obtained. If not, if you or your family already have a home insurance policy your equipment may already be covered. If this is not the case, or you cannot arrange an extension on your existing insurance to cover your equipment, you will need to obtain this yourself and forward copies of receipts to your funding body for reimbursement.

You should note that your funding body will not replace your equipment if it is lost, damaged or stolen and you have not taken up appropriate all-risks cover.

What happens to the equipment when my course ends?

All equipment bought with DSAs is, and will remain, your property once you have completed your course. You may decide to offer the equipment either to your university or college or your funding body for other students to use or you can keep the equipment if you are intending to go onto a further course of study. If you are planning to go on to further study on completion of your course, it is recommended that you do not sell or otherwise dispose of your equipment, as any equipment previously provided will be taken into account in any new assessment.

If I do not complete my course what happens to the equipment?

Check with your Awards Officer at the funding body should this situation arise.
If I experience problems with my equipment what should I do?

As part of the equipment recommendations in the report, warranties should normally have been included for your computer and equipment for the duration of the course. You should contact the supplier directly who will be able to give you advice on the next step.

**NON-MEDICAL HELPER ALLOWANCE**

How do I access the Specialist 1:1 Support recommended in my report?

If you are a student at The University of Nottingham, you can receive/continue to receive specialist support through your Dyslexia Support Tutor or Disability Adviser. Call in to or contact reception at the Student Services Centre (**0115 9513710**) in order to book an appointment.

If you are a student at another College or University, you will need to contact your Dyslexia Support Tutor/Disability Adviser/Student Services Centre who will advise you how to access this support.

How do I access the Note-taking, Mentoring, Library Browsing or other Non-Medical Helper’s Support recommended in my report?

If you are a student at The University of Nottingham, you should again call in or contact reception details as above in order to book an appointment with your Dyslexia Support Tutor or Disability Adviser. If note-taking support has been recommended, you will need to provide a copy of your timetable in order to enable us to coordinate this support.

If you are a student at another College or University, you will again need to contact your Disability Adviser/Student Services Centre who will advise you how to access support.

Can I organise the Non-Medical Helper Allowance support myself?

Most Universities/Colleges can arrange this for you in-house, although you may be able to organise this yourself. DSA-QAG and SLC only endorse suppliers of non-medical helper provision working through a managed and auditable organisation, with the expectation that this would include CRB checks being undertaken, health and safety being observed and a clearly defined complaints procedure being available.

We therefore recommend that you make an appointment to see your Disability/Learning Support Adviser at the University/College to discuss this further.
How do I go about getting the specialist equipment/software training which has been recommended in my assessment report?

Training on the recommended specialist software may be provided by the equipment and software supplier or by a specialist IT trainer within your University or College. The contact details are again included within your assessment report. We would recommend that you take up the recommended training in order to ensure that you gain best benefits from the assistive hardware/software provided.

GENERAL ALLOWANCE

My assessment report recommends an allowance towards books/photocopying/ printer consumables. How do I access this?

This varies from one funding body to another and you should be aware that core text books will not be funded and that the Research Councils do not as a rule fund these elements. Student Finance England will also not fund expenditure incurred prior to formal approval of the recommendations made in your Needs Assessment Report so if you do purchase anything before receiving their final approval letter you will not be able to claim this back.

- Some funding bodies will pay an amount into your bank account towards these additional allowances – but you will need to forward itemised copies of receipts – make sure you keep copies!

- Some funding bodies will only reimburse you once you have forwarded them the itemised copies of receipts for books/photocopying/ computer consumables as recommended in your report. Again, make sure you keep copies!

If Student Finance England is your funding body, you will need to download a claim form from the following webpage: https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas and send this off with either copy or original receipts. Make sure you keep copies of the receipts and of the claim form!

Remember that this element of the allowance is not designed to cover all of your costs, but is just a contribution towards these costs. All students are expected to incur some costs.
TRAVEL ALLOWANCE

What does this cover and how can I claim?

The travel allowance can provide funding towards extra academic and academic-related costs incurred as a result of attending University – e.g. if you are unable to walk or use public transport to get to and from University each day and have to travel by taxi. Your funding body will take account of public transport costs when calculating any reimbursement and you will also need to provide itemised copies of receipts. SLC also prefer students to set up an account with a local taxi firm. However, you should discuss arrangements with your funding body. You should note that the DSA cannot be used to cover costs to and from hospital appointments or to make extra journeys home.

EXAM ARRANGEMENTS

Additional Examination Arrangements have been recommended in my report – will my College or University put these in place automatically?

Some Universities or Colleges may put support in place on receipt of your DSA Needs Assessment – but this is not always the case. You should therefore book an appointment as soon as possible with your Dyslexia Support Tutor or Disability Adviser to discuss appropriate examination/assessment arrangements and ensure that these are put in place.

If you are a University of Nottingham student, you MUST make an appointment with your Dyslexia Support Tutor/Disability Adviser in order to ensure that your examination/assessment arrangements are put in place. You should ensure that you do this as soon as possible as there are deadlines for putting examination arrangements in place.
9. THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS – TIMELINE -

DSA NEEDS ASSESSMENT TIMELINES

The University of Nottingham ACCESS Centre aims to offer you an appointment either on the same day as you make initial contact with us either in person, by phone, or by email/letter or within 1 working day – subject to Funding Body confirmation. We will confirm this by letter or email by the next working day and send you a form to fill in.

Where possible, you should return the following to us, no later than 5 working days before your assessment:

- Evidence relating to your disability/specific learning difficulty
- Letter from your funding Body confirming that you can attend a Needs Assessment
- Completed Pre-Assessment Form
- Any previous DSA reports

The University of Nottingham ACCESS Centre aims to carry out your Needs Assessment within 15 working days of your initial request for a Needs Assessment. However, during busy times of the year or if your needs are particularly complex, there may be a delay in the appointment date we can offer. We will then offer you the earliest available appointment or assist you with a referral to another Assessment Centre. Allow approximately 2 hours for your Assessment.

A copy of the Needs Assessment report should be sent to you 10 working days after your assessment. Allow time for postal delivery before you chase up your report. Read through the report carefully and contact us if there are any amendments. If not, sign and return a copy of the report, plus the questionnaire which will be enclosed.

We aim to deal with any queries you have raised about the content of the report within 3 working days although this can take longer if we need to refer back to your Assessor, the Equipment/Software Supplier or your Disability Adviser.

Once we have received the signed copy of your report, copies of this will be sent to your Funding Body and, with your permission, to your Disability Adviser within 1 working day of us having received this.

Your Funding Body should contact you approximately 3-4 weeks after they have received your report to confirm the recommendations that have been agreed and how to go about getting the equipment and support. If you have
not already done so, contact the Disability Advisor at your University in order to put your support in place.

The Equipment Suppliers should deliver your equipment and training approximately **5-10 working days** from receipt of your order, although during busy times this can take longer. Remember to provide them with a copy of the Funding Body confirming what equipment and software has been agreed by your Funding Body.

### 10. FAQs

**I have a problem with my DSA-funded Computer. What should I do?**

You should contact the original supplier for advice. Do not take your computer to another computer supplier to fix, as this will invalidate your warranty. If your laptop battery is no longer holding its charge, a replacement can be funded via the DSA as this cannot be replaced under warranty.

**My computer has been stolen or has sustained accidental damage. What should I do?**

You should contact either your insurance company or the original supplier for advice as to how to make an insurance claim.

**I had my own computer or a previous DSA-funded computer at the time of assessment, but this has now ceased to operate. Will my funding body pay for repairs or a replacement computer?**

Your funding body may pay for repair/upgrade or for a replacement computer, but you will need to have a ‘Health Check’ carried out on your existing computer in order to identify whether repair/upgrade is a viable option. Your funding body may be able to fund the cost of this health-check and also the cost of the repairs/upgrade. Contact the ACCESS Centre who will be able to request a Health Check from your Funding Body. You must obtain approval for this before going ahead with either a Health Check or any repairs.
**Do I need to re-apply for the DSA Each Year?**

**Student Finance England/Wales/NI** - If you are a full-time undergraduate student and are applying for additional Student Finance Funding (such as the Student Loan or Grant) then you should check that the online form states that you are in receipt of the DSA. If not, or if you are a part-time, distance learning or postgraduate student, you will need to download and fill in the DSA1 Full form available at: [https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas](https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas)

**NHS/SAAS/Research Councils** – you may not need to re-apply each year but you should check with your Disability Adviser or with the ACCESS Centre.

**I Have a Placement Year or Year Abroad as Part of my Course. Will I be Eligible for the DSA During My Year Out?**

If you are on a paid full-year placement or a part-time placement where you do not also attend University for at least 10 weeks in that academic year, then you will **not** be eligible for the DSA. However, if you are on a year’s study abroad then you would be eligible. Contact your Disability Adviser or the ACCESS Centre if you are unsure!

**What do I do if I subsequently need additional items or support over and above those already recommended in my report?**

Contact the ACCESS Centre to discuss this further. If we agree to these additional items, we will contact your funding body to recommend them. However, you should be aware that there are governmental proposals to make changes to the DSA and this may affect future provision. Contact us for further information and advice regarding this.

**I have a different question!**

Contact Lesley Morrice (Manager) or Gina Slater (Administrator) - 0115 8467780 or by email at: accesscentre@nottingham.ac.uk
12. Feedback

We welcome feedback on the service you have received from the University of Nottingham ACCESS Centre and use it to help us to plan/make improvements to our services.

It would therefore help us to improve our services if you would fill in the Feedback Questionnaire which will be sent out to you with your assessment report or you can provide feedback directly to DSA-QAG at:

http://www.dsa-qag.org.uk/We-need-your-Feedback/feedback.html
http://dsa-qag.org.uk/student-survey.html

It is important to draw a distinction between feedback and a complaint. If you do have a complaint or specific issue that you wish to raise, you should follow our complaints procedure. Complaints will be handled in a professional and non-confrontational manner.

1. If you wish to discuss your feedback in more detail or have a complaint or specific issue you wish to raise, contact Lesley Morrice, The Manager of the ACCESS Centre either by telephone on 0115 8467780 or e-mail accesscentre@nottingham.ac.uk. She will respond either by email or by letter within 3 working days of your feedback/complaint.

2. If you remain dissatisfied after our initial response and wish to escalate your complaint, we will provide you with contact details for the Head of Student Disability and Diversity to whom you can address your complaint.

3. After the internal University processes have been exhausted, complainants have the opportunity to have their complaint independently reviewed by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA).

Should the matter be one which is not directly handled by the ACCESS Centre, we can offer guidance, including referral or signposting to the relevant department or service.
13. **Contact Details**

Lesley Morrice (Manager) or Gina Slater (Administrator)
The University of Nottingham ACCESS Centre
Student Services Centre
Portland Building
University Park
Nottingham
NG7 2RD

Tel: +44 (0)115 8467780
Fax: +44 (0)115 9514376

Email: [accesscentre@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:accesscentre@nottingham.ac.uk)