



THE
NORTHERN
SCHOOL
OF ART



DISABILITY SUPPORT

(A Guide to the DSA Process)

STUDENT SERVICES



northernart.ac.uk

Guide to Student Disability Support in the Northern School of Art

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1. Introduction

This booklet will explain the resources that are available at The Northern School of Art, how you can access them and also provide you with the information you need to help you to achieve your full potential.

In Higher Education support is available for students who have a disability that is covered by the Equality Act 2010. According to the Act a disability is a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities. 'Substantial' is more than minor or trivial, for example, if it takes much longer than it usually would to complete a daily task like getting dressed. 'Long-term' means it is a condition that is likely to last 12 months or more, for

example, a breathing condition that develops as a result of a lung infection.

2. Resources

As a provider of high quality education, we promote equality of opportunity and aim to ensure that all students are able to access all facilities and participate fully in their chosen programme of study and the wider student experience. The School has dedicated staff who will work with you to ensure that the correct support is in place and any reasonable adjustments are made to the learning or physical environment in order to make sure your individual needs are met.

Examples of the types of resources that may be available include:

- Specialist one to one tuition
- Specialist mentor support
- Sign Language Interpreters
- Specialist equipment and software
- Lecturer and support staff awareness
- Access to counselling

3. Accessing the support you need.

When you are studying higher education **you are responsible for organising the support you need**, however, the School's disability adviser will be able to help you with this and support you through the process.

It is important that you talk to the disability adviser about your support needs and the programme you are studying or planning to study as early as possible so that they can get a full understanding of your needs and will then be able to guide you through what you need to do to access support.

4. DSA Funding

When you are studying for a degree you will need to apply for funding called Disabled Students Allowance (DSA). The process for applying can appear complicated, however the disability adviser will explain to you how you make an application and how the funding process works. This process can take time and it is therefore advisable that, where possible, you apply for DSA before the start of your course, normally at least 3 months in advance. You can, however apply at any time during your course. If you have already started studying the disability adviser will work with you to set support up for you while you are applying for funding.

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need to repay DSA?

No. DSA funds are not income assessed and do not need to be repaid. This means your household income will not affect the level of support you are offered and accessing DSA will not add to any funds you need to repay.

What will DSA pay for?

DSA can provide funding for support strategies such as specialist software or equipment or support from a specialist tutor, however it will only cover the cost of the support that you need rather than the support you would prefer. If a computer is recommended Student Finance England will expect a £200 contribution towards the cost. If a specific computer is recommended, but you would prefer a different type of computer, then you can often negotiate to add additional funds to the awarded DSA to purchase your preferred system.

How do I know what support I will need?

If your application is accepted, you will be invited to a local

assessment centre to have a 'study needs assessment'. The study needs assessment will be written by an assessor and will make a request for support. More information about the way your needs are assessed are included later in this booklet.

What happens if my needs change during the course?

If you experience a condition that changes from time to time, it is important that your evidence details this. These changes can then be factored into your support recommendations. If, however your support needs change unexpectedly, your support needs and DSA funding can be reassessed.

Application

You will need to complete DSA 1 (short version) form.

When you are applying for your student finance you will be asked in the application form whether you have a disability. If you tick 'yes' you can also tick 'request a DSA form'. Student Finance England will then send you a pre-completed form that you can sign and return with evidence of your disability.

If you have already completed your application for funding you can download a DSA 1 from:

www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowance-dsas/how-to-claim

Evidence

When you apply for DSA you will be asked to provide evidence of your disability. This evidence will be used to justify any support you request.

Providing the right evidence to support your DSA application is very important. The evidence that you send with your application form needs to clearly state:

- ◆ The name of any condition or disability that you experience
- ◆ The way that it affects you on a day to day basis
- ◆ Any future changes in your condition or disability that will impact on your studies
- ◆ Details of any equipment or support that is recommended by the provider of the evidence to support you

Where should I get my evidence?

Medical conditions - Your evidence should be written by a suitably qualified professional who knows you or your case history. This might be your GP, Consultant, Practice Nurse, Community Psychiatric Nurse or another medical professional.

Your evidence must be up to date and written within the past year. It does not need to be a full medical report but should be signed and give details of the person who has written it. Your disability adviser will be able to provide you with a standard letter that you can give to the person writing the report which details the information required.

Specific learning difficulties (SpLD) - If you are a dyslexic thinker, experience dyspraxia or another SpLD, your evidence must be a full diagnostic assessment written by either an educational psychologist or suitably qualified specialist practitioner.

If you have a report from an unqualified person or you don't have any evidence of your SpLD you should talk to the disability adviser who can arrange an appointment with a specialist tutor to assess whether it would be beneficial for you to obtain an up to date full diagnostic report. If it is agreed that this is needed the disability adviser will then organise for an

assessment to take place to enable a report to be written.

Who is responsible for providing evidence?

Providing suitable evidence of your disability is **your** responsibility and you will be responsible for any associated costs in producing the evidence you need. The School may be able to support you with these costs, so it is important that you talk to the disability adviser about what is available in your year of study.

Who will use the evidence?

Any evidence you provide will be treated as confidential information. You will be asked by all those you choose to send it to whether you are happy for information to be used. They will ask your permission before they provide any other person with information about you and you are not obliged to give permission if you would prefer not to.

Essentially, however your evidence will be seen by three separate organisations:

1.Student Finance

Student Finance will use your evidence to process your DSA application. They will use it to confirm that you are entitled to the funds and will also use it when deciding what funds they are able to award you.

2. The Institution

It is your decision whether you provide the institution with evidence of your disability. However, it is extremely helpful if you provide the disability adviser with this information as they may need to set up support for you while you are waiting for your DSA to be put into place and it will help them ensure the correct support is put in place. The disability adviser will also

ask you about sharing some of the information you have provided with your teaching staff so that they can better support you. It will be your decision as to whether you give permission for this however, although not giving consent may mean you receive limited support or not quite the support you need.

3. The study needs assessor:

You will need to provide a study needs assessor with evidence of your disability so that they can help you make decisions about the support you need. Any recommendations they make will need to be supported by your evidence.

Study needs assessment

Once you have applied for DSA and supplied any evidence of your disability Student Finance England will ask you to arrange a study needs assessment.

What is a study needs assessment?

A study needs assessment is a meeting between you and an independent assessor. The assessor will talk to you about your course, your disability and your specific difficulties. The assessor is not medically trained and will not carry out any medical assessments.

During your assessment appointment the assessor will be able to demonstrate any equipment that you may find useful. The assessment is informal and will take approximately 2 hours.

Where can I have a study needs assessment?

All study needs assessments are carried out at accredited assessment centres. You are free to have your assessment carried out any of the national centres around the country. You can find a list of assessment centres at

<https://nmhproviders.co.uk/>

To arrange an appointment, you will need to provide the assessment centre with a copy of your evidence, the letter from Student Finance asking you to have a study needs assessment and some centres will ask you to complete an information form.

What happens after the appointment?

After you meet with the assessor they will write a study needs assessment report. This report is a record of the appointment will contain all of the assessor's recommendations for support. An assessor will take on average approximately 10 days to write this report.

After it is written the report will be sent to you to read and agree. It is very important that you read through the report and make sure you agree with all of the information and recommendations within it. If there is anything you don't agree with you must contact the assessor to discuss this with them.

Once you have agreed the report it will be sent to Student Finance England (SFE). SFE will then read the report and if they agree to all the recommendations they will write to you to let you know how to order equipment and arrange support. If there is anything they do not agree with, they will contact the assessor to ask for further information or clarification.

Typically, an assessor would not recommend any support that they did not feel justified in asking for.

Who arranges support?

It is your responsibility to order equipment and arrange your support, however, the institution's disability adviser will be happy to help you do this if you contact them. Equipment that

Is recommended will be supplied by a specialist provider, so there is no need to go out and purchase any equipment, they will know exactly what to provide you with. The supplier will also ensure that all of your equipment is covered by full warranties and in some cases accidental damage insurance.

In some cases your equipment will have a high value. It is always recommended that you have suitable insurance in place to cover loss, damage or theft. If a support item is lost, damaged or stolen, DSA funding will not provide a replacement.

Available funding

DSA funding is awarded to you for the length of your course. The funding will not provide you with any additional living costs except in certain circumstances where your disability will have a significant impact on your accommodation costs for example. The funds are renewed each year although you can only access these funds with the support of your assessor.

Funds are only paid directly to students in exceptional circumstances. The majority of funds will be paid directly to support providers and suppliers.

The table below provides details of the levels of funding available.

Specialist equipment	Non-medical helper	General
up to £5,849 for	up to £23,258 a	up to £1,954 a year

Checklist

To help make sure you have done everything you need to access DSA support, please use the following checklist:

Contact the disability adviser

You will need to make sure you keep them updated regarding your progress and should contact them with any questions you may have.

Arrange suitable evidence

You will need this evidence to arrange support at your institution and to apply for DSA funding.

Apply for DSAs

Applications for DSA should be made as soon as possible. You should apply for funding even if you are not sure whether you need any support. Applying during your course when you are struggling can be frustrating and lead to further delays in accessing support.

Respond to letters and emails

Student Finance England will write to you at each stage of the application process. You should read these letters carefully and follow their instructions. If you are in any doubt of what to do contact your disability adviser.

Read reports

Your study needs assessment is about you and the support you need. You must make sure that you agree to the recommendations and contact the assessor if you need to make any changes.

Take Responsibility

Arranging support, applying for funding and providing evidence is your responsibility. It is important that you follow all of the processes so that you have access to what you need. If you are unsure or need help contact your disability adviser.

Throughout the process of applying for DSA and arranging support you should ensure that you keep the disability adviser updated. The disability adviser can also support and provide answers to any questions you have at any time.

5. Non-DSA funded Support

You will still apply for DSA in the normal way however it will be the institution's disability adviser who will finalise your support with you and arrange for this to be provided within the institution. The institution has a responsibility to make reasonable adjustments where required to enable you to get the support you need to be able to fully access and participate in your programme of study. If you require support such as a reader, scribe, proof reader, note taker or a support/study assistant, the institution will arrange this as these types of support are not funded through DSA.

6. Counselling Support

The institution offers one-to-one confidential counselling sessions that can help you deal with non-academic problems that are having a negative effect on your academic work, as well as your enjoyment of life in Higher Education in general. The counselling service can help you:

- Identify and overcome barriers to your potential
- Develop your self awareness and a range of life skills
- Cope with issues such as homesickness, bereavement, depression, stress and anxiety
- Make informed choices in your academic, personal and social life
- Contact local services that can support you
- Access self-help resources

Counselling sessions can be booked through student services or directly with the student counsellor.

7. Useful Contacts

Student Adviser/Disability Adviser

Michelle Peart

01429 858410

Michelle.peart@northernart.ac.uk

disability@northernart.ac.uk

Student Services Manager/Disability Officer

Teresa Latcham

01429 858452

Teresa.latcham@northernart.ac.uk

Student Counsellor

Anne Russell

01429 858329

Counselling@northernart.ac.uk

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The Disabled Students' Allowance Process – Made Simple

