

# STUDENT ADVICE & WELLBEING TEAM

## DISABLED STUDENTS ALLOWANCE



# **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 attend

a 'study needs assessment', whether that be in person or remotely. The study needs assessment will be written by an assessor and a request for support will be made. 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**

When you are applying for your student finance you will be asked in the application whether you want to apply for DSA. When you have finished your main application, you'll be able to apply for DSA online. Once you've submitted your DSA application, you'll be told what evidence you need to submit.

If you have only want to apply for DSA and no other type of student finance you'll need to complete a DSA 1 form from:

[www.gov.uk/studentfinance](http://www.gov.uk/studentfinance)

### **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. You can submit a digital copy of your evidence through your online account.

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.

Specific learning differences (SpLD) - If you are a dyslexic thinker or experience 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 send you a letter with details of your supplier to arrange a study needs assessment. With your permission, SFE will pass your contact details on to the supplier who will contact you within 5 days to arrange the 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?**

Assessments can be carried out remotely or in person at a local assessment centre.



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 and 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 that funding has been agreed.

### **Who arranges support?**

The supplier will contact you to arrange your equipment delivery and Assistive Technology (AT) training. It is **your** responsibility to arrange your non-medical 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

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.

### **Non DSA Funding**

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. 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.

### **Contact Details**

Disability@northernart.ac.uk

01429 858410

# Student Finance



