

Student Finance

Sorting out your student finances is one of the most important parts of preparing for university. For many of us, getting the right financial support can make the difference between enrolling or not, so it's worth getting ahead of this early.

What is Student Finance?

Student Finance England (or Student Finance Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland, depending on where you live) provides loans and grants to help pay for:

- Tuition fees (usually paid directly to your university)
- Maintenance support – to help cover rent, food, travel and everyday costs
- Extra support if you're on a low income, have children, or have a disability

You apply online through the Student Finance website for your part of the UK.

<https://www.gov.uk/student-finance>

When should you apply?

As early as possible! You don't need to wait until your final grades are in. Applications open around February–March each year for the following autumn, and the earlier you apply, the more likely your funding will arrive on time.

What will you need?

- Your National Insurance number
- Your passport details or other ID
- Your course and university choice
- Your household income (your parent/guardian may need to submit info)
- Any evidence of a disability, if you're applying for extra help



Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)

Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) is financial support from the UK government to help cover extra costs a student may face, due to a disability, long-term health condition, mental health condition, or specific learning difficulty like dyslexia or ADHD. It's not a loan, so you don't have to pay it back.

The allowance can help with things like specialist equipment, non-medical helpers (e.g. note-takers or mentors), extra travel costs, and other study-related expenses. DSA is tailored to each student's individual needs, and is not based on income.

How To Apply

If you have NF1, NF2, or SWN, you may be eligible for Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA). Start by checking your eligibility. You can apply online through your student finance account, or by using the DSA1 form if you're not applying for other student finance.

To apply, you'll need:

- A letter of diagnosis or medical report confirming your condition
- To tick the disability box when applying for student finance

Once your application is reviewed, you'll be invited to a needs assessment to determine the support you're entitled to.

Full details and application steps:

 gov.uk/disabled-students-allowance-dsa.

Can you apply for DSA before enrolling?

Yes, you can apply for Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) before you've officially enrolled in your course. As long as you've applied for student finance and have a confirmed place (even if it's a conditional offer), you can start your DSA application. This allows time for your application to be processed and any support to be put in place before your course begins.

Let your university support you

Universities can act on your behalf when speaking to Student Finance — this is especially useful if your condition makes it hard to manage paperwork or calls. You can give consent for your university's Disability Advisor to:

- Speak directly to Student Finance
- Help with DSA forms
- Chase up payments or problems

Just ask your Disability Officer or support team how to give permission.

Helpful Tips

- Always ask for help if the process feels overwhelming. There's no shame in needing support — it's what the system is there for.
- If your circumstances change (e.g. health flare-ups), update Student Finance so they can reassess your support.
- Keep copies of emails, letters, and forms just in case you need to follow up.

