

Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)

Guidance Note

The Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) helps to pay for any extra costs or expenses that students incur attending their course that arise from their disability. These may include specialist equipment, non-medical helper support (eg: assistive technology training, study skills tuition, mentoring), general expenses and travel costs. The allowance is not means-tested, it is not repayable, it does not affect benefits and there is no age limit. The funding is administered through Student Finance England, Wales, Scotland or other funding body, such as a research council.

How do I apply?

This funding is for home (UK) students, both undergraduate and postgraduate, and full or part-time. EU students resident in the UK for more than 3 years may also be eligible. For more information about eligibility, guides and application forms visit www.yourdsa.com. Postgraduate students should always use the Full DSA Application Form.

You will need to include medical evidence of your disability or, if you have a specific learning difference, a post-16 educational psychologist's report. Please contact the Disability Advisor (katie@equalityfocus.co.uk) if you would like help with your application.

Confirmation of Eligibility for DSA

Once you have submitted your DSA application you will receive a letter from Student Finance England (SFE) or your alternate funding body confirming your eligibility for DSA and authorising you to go ahead with a Needs Assessment. You must take a copy of this letter and also your medical evidence or educational psychologist's report to the appointment for the assessor to see. If you have received DSA before you should also take copies of previous assessments.

What is a Needs Assessment?

Needs Assessments are carried out by independent assessors who are managed by a Regional Assessment Centre. During your assessment you will be asked about the difficulties you have encountered with your previous studies due to your disability, medical condition or specific learning difficulty. The assessor will also consider the particular demands of your course and try to anticipate any problems which may arise. Through this interview the assessor will draw up a series of recommendations for your support and detail the equipment, support workers, travel expenses, training and other strategies which are deemed necessary during your course.

The Needs Assessment Report

After the appointment the assessor will write up your recommendations in the form of a report, a copy of which is sent to you, to SFE or other funder and (if you have consented) to the School. On average this takes two weeks but may be longer at busy times or if your report is complex. You will have the opportunity to read it and make any comments that you feel are necessary.

Notification of Entitlement

You should then receive a letter from SFE or other funder confirming that they have received the report and approve the recommendations. Please ensure that you read the letter carefully and understand any stipulations they make. If the funding provider does not accept all of the recommendations you should contact the Assessment Centre for advice.

How do I access support and funds from my DSA?

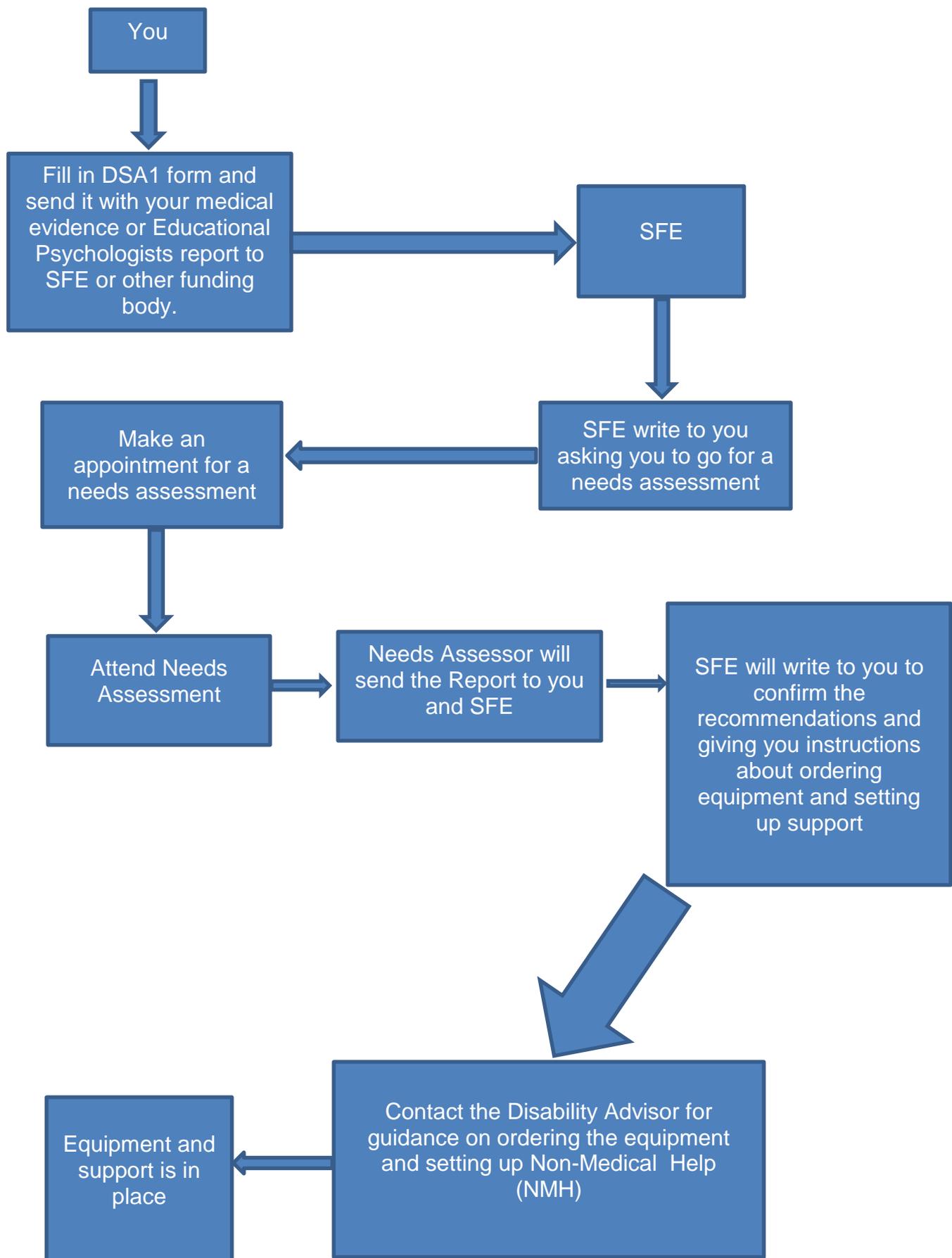
The letter from SFE (or other funder) will give you instructions on how to arrange your support, purchase any equipment etc. If you require any help with this process, please contact the Disability Advisor. We can help you to set up your 'non-medical helper' support, for example if you are entitled to the services of an AT trainer, tutor or mentor.

Please be aware that you need to keep invoices or receipts for any DSA General and Travel Allowance expenses that have been authorised (see your report for details: usually internet costs, photocopying, printer cartridges and books, or taxis) so you can submit claims to your funding provider for reimbursement during the year.

Do I need to renew my DSA after the first year?

All postgraduate and part time students will need to reapply for the DSA each year.

DSA Flowchart



If you have any queries or would like to discuss anything in confidence, please contact the Wellbeing Team on studentwellbeing@icmp.co.uk or 020 7604 2474.