

## **Advice Direct... Disabled Student Funding**

### **Introduction**

Welcome to another **Advice Direct...** leaflet, the Advice and Representation Centre's (ARC) written information service. This leaflet is designed to provide financial advice and information for **Disabled Students** (home-fee status) who are studying at Birmingham University. It looks at financial assistance for disability-related costs, other sources of funding, and what to do if you experience difficulties.

***For More Information on general money issues for students in Higher Education see: 'Advice Direct... Money Matters'.***

### **Disabled Students' Allowance**

#### ***What is DSA?***

This allowance is to help cover the extra costs that you incur on your course because of your disability or learning difficulty, such as specialised computer equipment, note-takers, or extra tutorial support. There are three allowances for 2010/11 or 2009/10, these are:

1. ***Specialist Equipment*** - up to £5,161 for the whole of your course is available for full and part time undergraduate students.
2. ***Non-medical helper's allowance*** - for any helper, such as readers, note-takers, or sign-language interpreters. Up to £20,520 a year is available for full time undergraduates. The maximum available for part-time students is £15,390 a year.
3. ***General Disabled Students' Allowance*** - for other disability-related costs, such as tapes or Braille paper, or to top up the first two allowances. Up to £1,724 a year is available for full time undergraduates and up to £1,293 a year for part time students.
4. ***Extra travel costs*** – any additional costs you must pay to attend University because of your disability.

***These figures are the maximum, and are meant to support students with a 'high level of need', therefore, most students can expect to receive less.***

#### ***How Do I Apply?***

Your LEA (or OU) will assess your needs and how much it will cost. Documentary evidence and a 'needs assessment' are required to identify your support needs relating to your course. The assessment must be carried out at an Independent Assessment Centre or the Disability coordinator may be able to arrange to do this at the University.

#### ***When Should I Apply?***

It is advisable to start the application process as soon as possible before beginning your course. It is important to check first with your LEA as it can differ from region to region.

***Postgraduates - Please Seek Further Advice.***

For more information please visit:

[http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/EducationAndTraining/HigherEducation/DG\\_070188](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/EducationAndTraining/HigherEducation/DG_070188)

### **Can I Claim Benefits?**

Most full-time students are not entitled to benefits, however, students with disabilities may be able to receive Income Support and/or Housing Benefit. You will not get Housing Benefit for living in University Accommodation.

To be entitled for both these forms of support you must qualify for a disability premium or if you have been incapable of work for a continuous period of at least 28 weeks - **For More Information visit: [www.skill.org.uk](http://www.skill.org.uk)**  
For information on benefits and tax credits for students with children see: '**Advice Direct...Students With Children**'.

### **Other Sources Of Funding**

You may be entitled to apply to the following fund:

- **Access to Learning Fund** - A government fund administered by the University to assist students who face financial hardship during their studies. For more information see '**Advice Direct... Access to Learning Fund**' leaflet

To find out what other help may be available to you, it may be helpful to make use of the following:

- **The Charity Directory** - contains information about charities throughout England who are willing to donate funds to good causes, including students. This directory can be found at your local library.
- **Funder Finder** - a database package very similar to the charity directory, which is available to use in Birmingham Public Library or the University's Careers Service.
- **EGAS (Educational Grants Advisory Service)** - an independent advice agency that can assist students, who are not eligible for statutory funding, to find other sources of assistance. [www.egas-online.org.uk](http://www.egas-online.org.uk)

### **Financial Problems**

**If you experience financial difficulties - you do have not enough money, or have an unexpected cost and are unable to pay for it, you should seek help as soon as possible** (see below: 'Sources of Help').

It may be possible to sort out your problem through an assessment of your finances and careful budgeting with an Advisor. You may be able to delay any payments that you have until you have the finances available. In certain cases there may be sources of funding that you can apply for (see above: 'Other Sources of Funding'). You should also inform your personal tutor of your difficulties as they may be affecting your academic performance.

### **Sources Of Help**

#### **Advice & Representation Centre (ARC) -**

For an appointment with an Advisor call: 0121 251 2400 or Email: [thearc@guild.bham.ac.uk](mailto:thearc@guild.bham.ac.uk)

Visit website at: [www.guildofstudents.com/thearc](http://www.guildofstudents.com/thearc)

#### **Disability Co-ordinator, Student Support & Counselling**

For an appointment you need to visit in person or Email: [disability@bham.ac.uk](mailto:disability@bham.ac.uk)

Visit: [www.sscs.bham.ac.uk/disability](http://www.sscs.bham.ac.uk/disability)

#### **Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities**

For Information service: (open Tuesdays 11.30am to 1.30pm and Thursdays 1.30 to 3.30pm)

call: 0800 328 5050 (freephone) or 0800 068 2422 (textphone) or email: [info@skill.org.uk](mailto:info@skill.org.uk).

Or visit: [www.skill.org.uk](http://www.skill.org.uk)

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**Disclaimer:** The information on this leaflet only provides general guidance on financial support and the law. The leaflet should not be regarded or relied upon as a complete or authoritative statement of the law. The ARC will not accept any liability for any claims or inconvenience as a result of the use of information on this leaflet. If you think you have a legal problem you should seek further advice.

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